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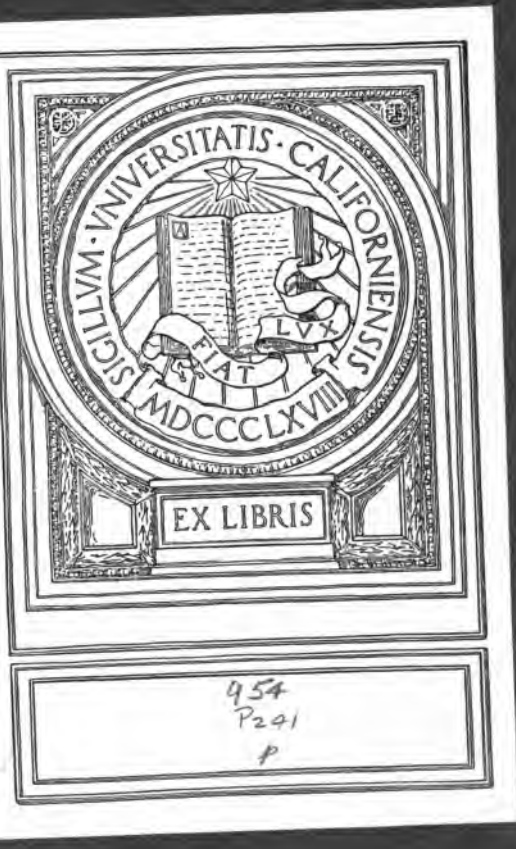

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Pomander Walk

BY

LOUIS N. PARKER

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SAMUEL FRENCH, 25 West 45th St., New York

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POMANDER WALK

A Comedy in Three Acts

BY

LOUIS N. PARKER

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POMANDER WALK

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POMANDER WALK.

First performed at Montreal, Dec. 12, 1910. Then at Wallack's Theatre, New York, Dec. 20, 1910.

PERSONS.

JOHN SAYLE, 10TH BARON OTFORD. *Yorke Stephens*
LIEUT. THE HON. JOHN SAYLE, R. N. *Edgar Kent*
ADMIRAL SIR PETER ANTROBUS.... *George Giddens*
JEROME BROOKE-HOSKYN, ESQ..... *Lennox Pawle*
THE REV. JACOB STERNROYD, D. D., F. S. A..... *T. Wigney Percyval*
MR. BASIL PRINGLE..... *Reginald Dance*
JIM..... *Stanley Lathbury*
THE MUFFIN-MAN..... *S. N. Price*
THE LAMPLIGHTER..... *Charles Clugston*
THE EYESORE..... *Leslie M. Hunt*
MADAME LUCIE LACHESNAIS..... *Sybil Carlisle*
MLLE. MARJOLAINE LACHESNAIS.. *Dorothy Parker*
MRS. PAMELA POSKETT..... *Cicely Richards*
MISS RUTH PENNYMINT..... *Helen Leyton*
MISS BARBARA PENNYMINT..... *Winifred Fraser*
THE HON. CAROLINE THRING..... *Marie Burke*
NANETTE..... *Harriet Davis*
JANE..... *Margaret Phillips*

ACT I. Saturday afternoon, 25th May, 1805.
ACT II. Saturday morning, 1st June, 1805.
ACT III. Monday evening, 3rd June, 1805.

For costumes and the general atmosphere of the play consult the illustrated novel published under the same title by the John Lane Co., New York, and by John Lane, The Bodley Road, Vigo Street. London, W.

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POMANDER WALK.

PROPERTIES FOR ACT I.

Quoits down stage between Gazebo and tree.
Brass cannon R. of walk—near river wall.
Birdcage hanging outside top window of No. 1.
Extra pipe in corner of gateway of No. 2.

KITCHEN TABLE AT BACK OF No. 1, AND ON IT

Muffins on tray
Brass candlestick and candle
Kettle (Act 3)

ANOTHER KITCHEN TABLE BACK OF STAGE, AND ON IT

Book
Parcels (Act 3)
Basket and vegetables
Tea-things and tray (Act 3)
Baby for nurse

No. 1 HOUSE.

1 chair upstairs
1 chair down
(Downstairs) tray with 2 clay pipes filled
Tobacco jar
2 pewters
2 extra pewters on floor
Plate and coin

No. 2 HOUSE.

1 chair upstairs
2 down

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(Downstairs) plate and coin on it
Cat (*Stuffed*)

No. 3 HOUSE.
1 chair upstairs
1 chair and table down
(Downstairs) student's lamp
Plate and coin
Books
Punch-bowl and ladle (Act 3)
Coloured wineglass " "
Milkjug " "
Lemon " "

No. 4 HOUSE.
1 chair upstairs
2 chairs down
Violin upstairs
(Downstairs) 2 plates and coins
Glass of water
5 bunches of roses placed lightly on rose bush in garden, so that they can be gathered, and 3 loose bunches of white flowers outside top window (Act 3)

No. 5 HOUSE.
1 chair upstairs
Special chair and table down
(Downstairs) tray with claret and 3 slices of cake (not stale) plate and coin

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POMANDER WALK.

LIGHTING FOR ACT I.

(As much light as possible.)

All whites, borders and foots full.
R. 4 amber spots (2 on bridge)
R. 2 white olivettes.
L. 2 amber spots.
Back 1 white olivette.

(No change of light during act.)

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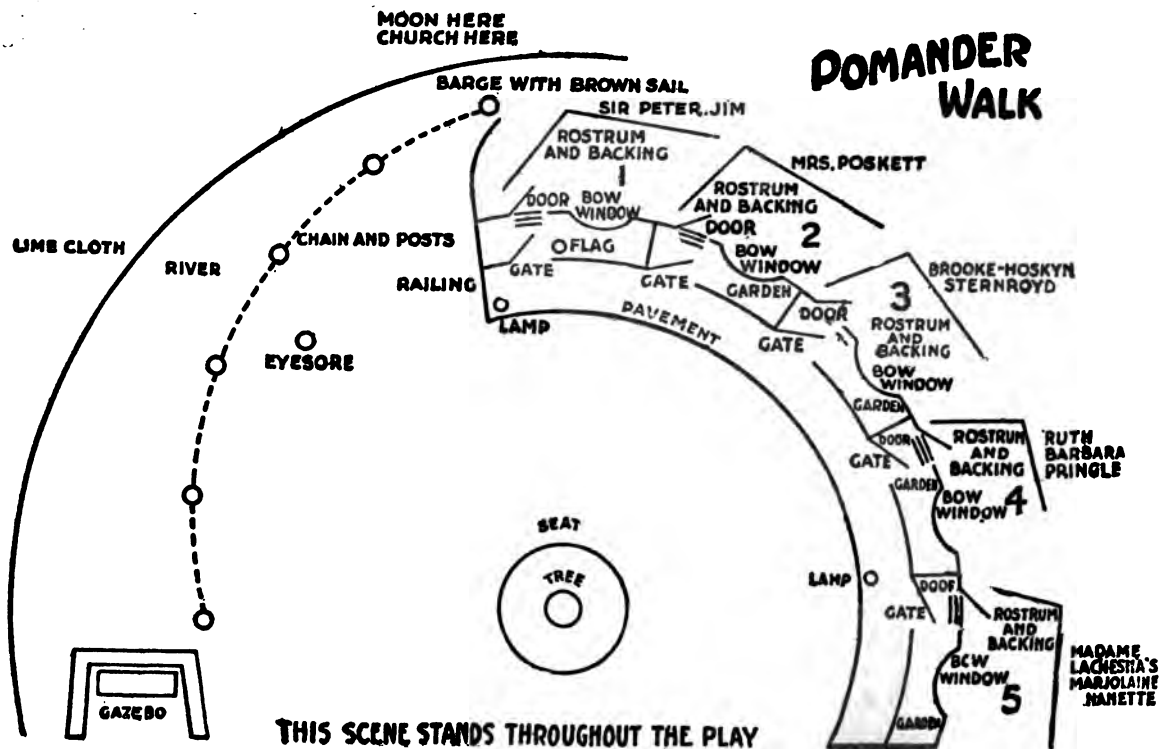

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POMANDER WALK.

(*Music starts. After 20 bars cease, and* MARJOLAINE *enters in front of drop as*)

PROLOGUE

(*Curtsey*)
Kind friends, to-night we lead you far away
From all the turmoil of the busy day,
Into a quiet nook where thrushes sing:
Into the days when George the Third was King.

Five little houses, by the waterside; (*Indicates* L.)
Five little gardens, only eight feet wide; (*Indicates* L.)
Two little oil-lamps, giving little light,
And only kindled on a moonless night.
Here the cool shadow of a sheltering tree, (*Indicates* C.)
And here the river, singing to the sea, (*Indicates* R.)
Upon whose bosom, drifting to and fro,
The lazy barges slowly come and go.
Here the gazebo stands (R.) What's that? you ask—
A kind of summer house, arranged to mask
Strange goings-on, strange plottings and contrivings,
Quarrels, conciliations, wooings, wivings.

It is the summer, and the month is June,
When roses blossom, birds are all a-tune;
Morning and midday, sunset—and a moon!
(*Finger up*)

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In these surroundings placid and genteel,
Place ordinary folk who think and feel,
Let them live out their lives, and do and say
Just what they like: and there you have our play.
(*Bows*)
Where is Pomander Walk? Why, close at hand—
Out Chiswick way—halfway to Fairyland.
(*Curtsey*)

(*Exit* MARJOLAINE. *Music resumes, and after* 10 *bars curtain rises.*)

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POMANDER WALK.

ACT I.

(Saturday afternoon, May 25th, 1805.)

SCENE:—*Pomander Walk is a retired crescent of five very small, old-fashioned houses near Chiswick, on the river-bank. On the left of the actor are the houses. They are exactly alike: miniature copies of Queen Anne mansions. Each has a little strip of garden in front of it, separated from the road by an ornamental railing with a still more ornamental gate. Each has its link extinguisher. Three steps lead up to each little door and each door has a beautiful brass knocker. Each little house has a little projecting bow window with square panes, on the ground floor, and two windows above. A brick pavement runs in front of the garden railings; then there is a gravelled space; then a lawn, which extends to the river's edge, where it is bounded by a chain hanging from white posts. In the centre of the lawn is a splendid elm, with a seat round its trunk. At the back, Pomander Lane turns off to the left, along Pomander Creek, in which a barge is lying with its brown sail hoisted to dry. On the right, at the back, are Pomander Steps, leading to the river. Just below the steps is a low shrub. On the right, in front, is a summer-house. The houses are numbered from the upper end, and*

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opposite numbers one and five are public oil-lamps on wooden posts. In the garden of Number One is a miniature mast, properly rigged, with the Union Jack floating from it. A wicker cage, with a thrush in it hangs outside the upper window. The woodwork of all the houses except Number Five, is painted green; that of Number Five is white, and it is also distinguished by a lovely display of flowers on all the window-sills.

At the rise of the curtain SIR PETER ANTROBUS, *a genial but plethoric old* ADMIRAL *with a patch over one eye, and* MR. BROOKE-HOSKYN, *a ponderous, slow-moving person, with a rumbling bass voice, both in their shirt-sleeves, have just finished a game of quoits.* BASIL PRINGLE, *slightly hunch-backed, pale-faced, with soulful eyes, is seated at an open window of Number Four, (upstairs), practising a passage in the slow movement of the* KREUTZER SONATA *on the violin, and repeating it over and over again, shaking his head with evident dissatisfaction.* MISS RUTH PENNYMINT, *thin and forty, is seated at the open downstair window of the same house.* THE EYESORE, *a nondescript creature, clad in a long garment with bulging pockets, somewhat resembling a smock frock, and in a terrible old rough-haired top hat, is fishing from the upper end of the Walk.*

Presently MRS. POSKETT, *forty and buxom, comes out of Number Two, carrying a large and lovely sandy-haired cat in her arms, which she puts down in her front garden, out of sight. Then she busies herself in her little garden.*

SIR PETER. (*Up* R. C. *to* BROOK-HOSKYN *down* R. *Whose quoit has fallen over the pin*) A ringer! —(*He looks at all the quoits*) One maiden to you,

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Brooke! Game all!—Peeled, by Jehoshaphat! (*He whistles with Bos'n's whistle towards No.* 1. JIM, *an old sailor with a stiff leg, appears at the upstairs window*)

JIM. Ay, ay, Admiral!

SIR PETER. The usual—here, under the elm. And look lively.

JIM. Ay, ay, sir! (*He disappears*)

SIR PETER. (*To* BROOKE-HOSKYN, *alluding to the game*) We must play it off.

BROOKE. Another time, Sir Peter. It is very warm; and my eye is out.

SIR PETER. (*Laughing*) So's mine, but I see straight, what?

BROOKE. (*Alluding to* MRS. POSKETT *and* RUTH) Should we not resume our habiliments? The fair are observing us.

SIR PETER. (*Shocked*) Gobblessmysoul! (*He and* BROOKE-HOSKYN *hastily help each other on with their coats, which were lying on the bench under the elm.* JIM *brings a tray with two pewters, two long clay pipes, a jar of tobacco, and a lighted candle in a brass candlestick. He puts tray centre of seat under tree, helps* SIR PETER *on with his coat and picks up quoits and pin, which he carries into No.* 1. *Alluding to* BASIL) Wish he'd stop his infernal scraping!

BROOKE. (*Condescendingly*) Poor fellow! What a way of earning his living!

SIR PETER. (*Calling to* BASIL) Mr. Pringle! Mr. Pringle! Ahoy!

(*Stop violin off.*)

BASIL. (*Stops on a dreadful wrong note*) I beg your pardon, Admiral! I was engrossed!

SIR PETER. Join us under the elm—what?

BASIL. With pleasure. I'll just put away my Strad. (*Disappears*)

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SIR PETER. (*Pewter in hand, just about to drink*) His what?

BROOKE. (*With great superiority*) His Stradivarius:—his violin.

SIR PETER. Oh! His fiddle! Why couldn't he say so? (*Calls*) Jim!

JIM. (*Just going into No.* 1) Ay, ay, sir!

SIR PETER. (*Pointing to the pewters*) Another. (JIM *exit. Raising the pewter*) Well!—the King! (*Standing*)

BROOKE. (*Solemnly*) His most gracious Majesty King George—God bless him! (*Standing*)

(*Both drink.*)

SIR PETER. Why, you do that as well as if you was a toastmaster.

BROOKE. (*Flustered*) Nothing of the sort, sir.

SIR PETER. (*With a sigh of satisfaction*) Ah!—Now! a pipe of tobacco with you, Mr. Brooke-Hoskyn?

BROOKE. Delighted.

SIR PETER. (*Pointing to jar*) St. Vincent. Prime stuff! and—in your ear!—(*Sits*)—smuggled!

BROOKE. No!—reely?

(*They light their pipes simultaneously at the candle, talking meanwhile. Both seated.*)

SIR PETER. Was you at a banquet again last night, Brooke?

BROOKE. (*Indifferently*) Yes—yes. The Guildhall. All the *haut ton!*

SIR PETER. Lucky—(*Lighting his pipe*) Lucky dog!—Turtle, eh?

BROOKE. (*Wearily*) As usual. Believe me, personally I should prefer seclusion and—meditation; but my friends are good enough to insist. Only last night, Fox (*With immense importance,*

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POMANDER WALK

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and with his eye on SIR PETER) my good friend, the Right Honourable Charles James Fox—said, "Brooke, my boy"—just like that—"Brooke, my boy, what would our banquets be without you?"

SIR PETER. (*Impressed*) Gobblessmysoul!—What's your average?

BROOKE. I am sorry to say, I usually have to wrench myself away four nights a week.

(*Enter* JANE *with baby from No.* 3.)

SIR PETER. Think o' that, now!—By the way, how's your wife?

BROOKE. Cheerful, sir. Selina is faint but pursuing. We have been in the holy state of matrimony five years, and never a word of complaint has fallen from the dear soul's lips.

SIR PETER. Re-markable! And all that time Pomander Walk has seen scarcely anything of her.

(MRS. POSKETT *begins to come down.* JANE *goes to* L. *of* BROOKE.)

BROOKE. She has been much occupied—much occupied.

SIR PETER. Four olive-branches—in five years.

BROOKE. Of the female sex—Number four. (*Pointing to baby*)

(JANE *goes to* MRS. POSKETT.)

SIR PETER. And another coming! That's right, Brooke! Do your duty, and damn the consequences!—But let's have a boy next time—make a sailor of him, what?

(MRS. POSKETT *has come down with some embroidery.* JANE *goes out* R. U. E. *with the baby.*)

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MRS. POSKETT. Good afternoon, gentlemen.

(*They rise.*)

SIR PETER. (*Starting*) Gobblessmysoul! Servant, Mrs. Poskett.

(*Business with pipes.*)

MRS. POSKETT. Oh! Don't put your pipes away —*please!* I have been well trained. Alderman Poskett smoked, even indoors. (JIM *enters. She sits*) Can I sit down? (BROOKE *moves tray to back of tree*) Now, go on talking. Just as though I wasn't here. (MRS. POSKETT *sits* C. SIR PETER R.)

SIR PETER. Hah—hum! (*An awkward pause.* JIM *brings the third pewter*)

MRS. POSKETT. (*Promptly seizing it*) For me? —How thoughtful of you! (*She drains it off in one long, ecstatic drink*)

(SIR PETER *and* BROOKE-HOSKYN *can only stare at each other.*)

SIR PETER. Jim—another!

MRS. POSKETT. (*Bashfully*) Oh, no! I couldn't. Reely and positively, I couldn't!

SIR PETER. (*Severely*) We was expecting Mr. Pringle, ma'am.

(JIM *retires.*)

MRS. POSKETT. Ah, poor Mr. Pringle! Poor fellow. I was rather alarmed when he came a month ago. A musician, you know! One never knows what their morals may be.

SIR PETER Well, he's quiet enough—except when he's making a noise!—haha!

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(BROOKE *ostentatiously ignores the joke.*)

BROOKE. He is some sort of a cousin to the Misses Pennymint, I am told.

MRS. POSKETT. (*Mysteriously*) Yes—we are told. But who knows? I fear—I fear, he is—sh!—a lodger!

BROOKE. (*Shocked*) You don't say so! A lodger! Heavens!

SIR PETER. Why, dash it, you yourself——!

BROOKE. (*Sternly*) The Rev. Dr. Sternroyd, who inhabits the lower portion of my house is my *guest,* sir!

SIR PETER. Oh!—Ah!—Hum!

BROOKE. If from time to time he chooses to offer my wife a small token of his appreciation, that is not a matter of public concern. (*Retires up stage, indignant*)

SIR PETER. (*Showing symptoms of discomfort at the tone the conversation is taking*) Where's that cat of yours, ma'am?

MRS. POSKETT. Sempronius? The dear thing is so happy! He's in the front garden, listening to your dear thrush.

SIR PETER. (*Half rising*) By Jehoshaphat—!

MRS. POSKETT. Oh, don't be alarmed! Sempronius adores him. He wouldn't touch a hair of your thrush's head!

SIR PETER. (*Sitting again*) I warn you, ma'am! If he does, I'll wing him!

(BASIL PRINGLE *comes out of No.* 4 *and towards the elm. Comes* L.)

MRS. POSKETT. You playful creature! (*Enter* JIM *with fourth pewter—comes down* R.) Why, you've a heart like butter.

SIR PETER. (*Indignant*) Me, ma'am! Me!

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(*Sees* BASIL) Ah, Mr. Pringle! (*Pointing to* JIM) Here's your pewter.

BASIL. Good afternoon, Mrs. Poskett—Gentlemen—Thank you, Admiral, but you'll excuse me, I'm sure. I have a long night's work.

(JIM *takes pewter back to No.* 1. *As he gets near the house he drinks off the contents to the* EYESORE'S *disgust.*)

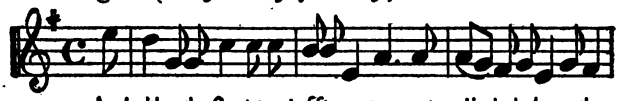
SIR PETER. Fiddling at Vauxhall?

BASIL. As usual, Sir Peter. It is a gala night: Fireworks.

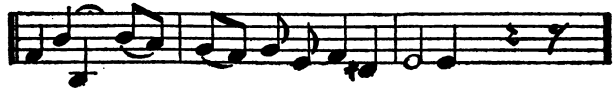
MRS. POSKETT. Fireworks! Oh! Ravishing!

BASIL. And Mrs. Poole is to sing—and Incledon——

SIR PETER. (*Jumping up*) Incledon?—Then, by gum, I must be there! He was a sailor, y'know. I remember him in '83. On the Raisonable! Lord Hervey, and Pigot and Hughes—they'd have him up to sing glees together!—Lord! Did ye ever hear him sing:—(*Sings very jovially*)



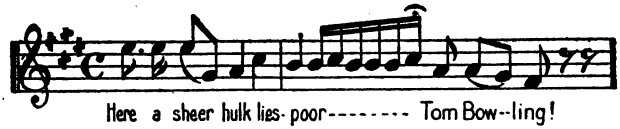
A health to the Cap-tain and of-fi-cers too, and all who be-long to the



jo-vial crew on board of the A--re---thu-sa!

BASIL. To-night he sings Tom Bowling.

SIR PETER. Ah!—(*Sings with tear-compelling sentiment*)



Here a sheer hulk lies-poor-------- Tom Bow--ling!

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JIM. (*From upper window of No.* 1, *howls*) "Here a sheer hulk——"

SIR PETER. (*Turning and shaking his fist at him*) Ah, you noisy swab—!

(JIM *shuts window and disappears.*)

MRS. POSKETT. (*In tears*) Oh, don't, Sir Peter! Alderman Poskett used to sing just like that. You could hear him a mile off, but you could never tell what tune it was.

SIR PETER. Gobblessysoul!—I beg your pardon!

BROOKE. (*To* BASIL) Are we not to see the Misses Pennymint to-day?

BASIL. They are very busy.

MRS. POSKETT. (*Demurely*) I saw Miss Ruth sewing at a ball-dress. (*Slily malicious*) Which of them's going to a ball?

BASIL. (*Mysteriously*) Ah—!

MRS. POSKETT. I've seen them making wedding-dresses, and even—(*With pretty confusion*) hehe!—christening robes!

BROOKE. (*Loftily*) I trust you do not insinuate Pomander Walk harbours mantua-makers?

BASIL. (*Quietly*) It harbours a poor, hunch-back fiddler!

SIR PETER. (*Quickly*) The Misses Pennymint are estimable ladies, and we are all, I am happy to say, like one family. What, Brooke?

BROOKE. Um—precisely. With poor relations.

MRS. POSKETT. (*To* SIR PETER) Do you include the French people at Number five?

SIR PETER. Certainly. They are not French, ma'am; and if they were, they couldn't help it.

MRS. POSKETT. (*Giggling, and pointing to the* EYESORE) Do you include the Eyesore?

SIR PETER. (*Indignant*) No, I do not!—He doesn't live here. If England were under a proper government, he would be hanged for trespassing.

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I have tried to remove him, but—ha!—it appears he has as much right here as any of us!

BASIL. After all, he never moves from one spot.

MRS. POSKETT. He never speaks to anybody.

(MADAME LACHESNAIS, *a very beautiful woman, no longer in her first youth, appears at the door of No.* 5 *followed by her daughter,* MARJOLAINE, *a girl of* 17, *and by* NANETTE, *a French Bonne, in a Breton costume.* NANETTE *carries a basket.*)

SIR PETER. He'd better not, ma'am!

BROOKE. And I will do him the justice to say, he never catches a fish!

BASIL. (*Seeing them, and drawing the attention of the others to them*) Madame!

(BROOKE-HOSKYN *is down* L. NANETTE *goes along the pavement to corner of garden of No.* 1 (R.) MARJOLAINE *with her. All the men rise.* SIR PETER *whistles.* JIM *comes across from No.* 1. SIR PETER *indicates the pewters, pipes, etc., which* JIM *takes back to the house.*)

MADAME. (*Seeing the group under the tree*) Ah! Good afternoon! I am going marketing in Chiswick with Nanette. (SIR PETER *and* MRS. POSKETT R.) She cannot speak a word of English, you know. (*Comes* C.) Marjolaine, you may take your book under the tree, if our friends will have you.

MARJOLAINE. (*Very slight French accent*) It is nearly time for my singing lesson, *Maman.*

MADAME. Ah, yes—Mr. Basil, I fear you find her very backward.

BASIL. Oh, no, Madame—I assure you.

MADAME. (*To* MARJOLAINE) Ask Miss Barbara to chaperon you, as I have to go out.

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MARJOLAINE. *Bien, Maman.*

MADAME. (*Smiling*) You are to speak English, dear.

MARJOLAINE. *Bien, Maman*—Oh! I mean, yes, mother! (*Goes up stage*)

(BROOKE *is about to offer his arm to* MADAME. SIR PETER *brushes past him.*)

SIR PETER. May I not offer you my escort?

(MRS. POSKETT *snorts.*)

MADAME. (*Laughing*) No, no!—I have Nanette. Nothing can happen to me while I have Nanette. (*Crosses and goes up* R.)

MRS. POSKETT. (R.) As if anything ever could happen in Chiswick!

(SIR PETER *follows* MADAME *up.* BASIL *goes* R. *of tree and sits.*)

MADAME. (*To* MARJOLAINE) I shall not be gone half an hour. (*She goes out with* NANETTE, *round the corner*)

BROOKE. (*To* MARJOLAINE) Won't you come and sit down?—

(MRS. POSKETT *goes up and round to* L.)

MARJOLAINE. In a moment. (*At* RUTH'S *window*) Miss Ruth—is Barbara busy?

RUTH. She's closetted with Doctor Johnson.

MARJOLAINE. Will you ask her to come out when she's done? (*She comes to the elm*)

BASIL. (*Rising*) Mademoiselle——

MARJOLAINE. Pray don't move. Barbara will be here in a moment. (*Simply*) She is with Doctor Johnson.

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(RUTH *and* BARBARA *appear at the door of their house. From the moment* BARBARA *appears* BASIL'S *eyes follow her with rapt attention.*)

BASIL. (*Gravely*) Ah, yes!—Dr. Johnson!—Surely it is very pathetic!

BROOKE. Dr. Johnson! I thought the old thing was dead.

SIR PETER. Oh, she means the parrot. (*Sitting* C.) Come and sit down Missie; come and sit down.

(MRS. POSKETT *promptly comes and sits* L. *of* SIR PETER; *he turns; sees her; rises, and goes* R. *to* MARJOLAINE.)

MARJOLAINE. (*Sitting beside him*) I used to be so afraid of you, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER. Gobblessmysoul! Why?

MARJOLAINE. You were so angry with us for painting our house white——!

(RUTH *and* BARBARA *come out of No.* 4. BARBARA *is of that age which is never entered on the census paper; but is still extemely pretty and fresh. Both are obviously very poor, and obviously ladies.*)

SIR PETER. (*Clumsily*) Oh—hum—the others were green, d'ye see. But it's an admirable contrast.

(MRS. POSKETT *snorts.* BASIL *rises.*)

BARBARA. (*She sees* MARJOLAINE *and runs to her*) Oh, Marjolaine, dearest. Doctor Johnson has been most extraordinarily eloquent.

(MARJOLAINE *runs forward and kisses her, and both walk about with their arms round each*

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other's waists. SIR PETER *goes up and wanders round to* L.)

RUTH. (*Coming* P. C *under the elm*) Good afternoon—Dearest Barbara—I she has just had her hour with Dr. Johnson. Her memories of Lieutenant Charles are at their liveliest. (*Sits* C.)

MRS. POSKETT. (L *of tree*) Very unwholesome, *I* think.

RUTH. (*To* BASIL) Lieutenant Charles was in His Majesty's Navy, you know, and dearest Barbara was affianced to him.

(BROOKE-HOSKYN *is seated* L.)

BASIL. (*Coldly*) So I have heard.

RUTH. Unhappily he was abruptly removed from this earthly sphere.

BASIL. I presume he fell in battle?

RUTH. Say, rather, in single combat.

SIR PETER. (L. *to* BROOKE-HOSKYN) As a matter of fact he was knocked on the head outside a tavern. (*He wanders* R.)

RUTH. But he had bestowed a token of his affection on dearest Barbara in the shape of the remarkable bird you may have seen——

BASIL. The parrot who occupies the back ground-floor parlour?

RUTH. The grey parrot with the red tail—Doctor Johnson. Named after the great Lexicographer in consideration of his astonishing fluency of speech. Doctor Johnson is Barbara's only consolation.

BARBARA. (*In gazebo with* MARJOLAINE. *She has come up with* MARJOLAINE, *and hears this, to* MARJOLAINE *very sentimentally*) Yes, dear. He speaks with Charles's voice, (BASIL *rises and turns up stage*) and says the things Charles used to say.

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MARJOLAINE. How lovely! I wish I coul
him.

BARBARA. Ah, no. Not even you may sha
melancholy joy. (*Rises, but goes back to se*

SIR PETER. (*Up* R. *to* BASIL) I tell yo
bird's language would silence Billingsgate.
atmosphere of that room must be solid, sir
MARJOLAINE) Well, Missie, (MRS. POSKETT
We all hope you've grown to like the Walk

(BASIL *sits* R. *of tree.*)

MARJOLAINE. I love it! And so does *M*

SIR PETER. It is a sheltered haven. (*H*
around) Pomander Walk! Look at it! A
of content! What says the poet? "The wor
getting, by the world forgot."

ALL. (*Sigh*) Ah!

(*All stand in a line across the front of stag*
their backs to the audience. After
sigh of content all move, break up the li
form groups.)

BARBARA. When the sunlight falls on it s
lovely it is!

BASIL. It reminds me of the music I am a
on.

MARJOLAINE. (L. *of* BASIL) What *is* th
sounds beautiful through the wall.

BASIL. It is by a new German compos
man called Beethoven. My old violin-
Kreutzer, sent it to me. (THE EYESORE *ri*
takes the stump of a villainous clay pipe fr
pocket, and during the next few speeches in
that he finds it blocked up, and is unable t
it draw) Ah! these new Germans! They
complicated! So difficult. I am old-fashion
know. I had the honour of playing und

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Haydn at the Salomon concerts. Yes! and in the very first performance of his immortal Oratorio, The Creation at Worcester.

MARJOLAINE. Oh——!

BASIL. So I'm prejudiced.

SIR PETER. I don't know anything about your new-fangled fiddle-faddles; but, by Jehoshaphat, Pringle, play a hornpipe, and I'll dance till your arms drop off!

MARJOLAINE. (*Clapping her hands*) Oh! you must teach me!

SIR PETER. That I will, Missie!

MRS. POSKETT. (*To* BROOKE-HOSKYN) No fool like an old fool!

BARBARA. (*Pointing at the* EYESORE, *who is sucking at, and trying to blow through his pipe*) Oh! The Eyesore's going to smoke——!

RUTH. His poisonous tobacco! Can you not speak to him, Admiral?

SIR PETER. I can, Madam; but he'll swear back.

(*The* EYESORE *is now trying to ram a straw through the stem.*)

MRS. POSKETT. (*To* SIR PETER; *laughing*) And then, of course, you're helpless!

SIR PETER. Not at all, ma'am. I hope I can swear with any man; but—the ladies——!

BROOKE. Thank heaven! His pipe won't draw!

(EYESORE *throws away his pipe on stage.*)

RUTH. He throws it away. We are saved!

(ENTER THE REVEREND JACOB STERNROYD, *round the corner. He is a shrivelled-up old gentleman in a rusty black suit, and a rusty brown wig. He wears large horn spectacles. He is carrying a quantity of books.*)

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BASIL. Ah! Here is our good Doctor S
royd.

BROOKE. With his books, as usual. W
brain!

SIR PETER. Old dryasdust!

BASIL. (*Startled*) Look!

(STERNROYD *stops short; picks up the* EYES
pipe; raises it close to his spectacles, and s
symptoms of frantic joy.)

MRS. POSKETT. Bless the man! He's pick
the Eyesore's filthy pipe!

BROOKE. But why the step-dance?

SIR PETER. (*Shouting*) Doctor Stern
ahoy!

STERNROYD. (*Becoming aware of the g*
Dear me!—Tut, tut! I had not observed y
Ah, my friends! (*Comes down* c.) Congra
me!

SIR PETER. What about, Doctor?

(ALL *gather round* DOCTOR STERNROYD.)

STERNROYD. (*Exhibiting the pipe*) This
beautiful specimen of an early Elizabethan tob
pipe——

BROOKE. (*Just* R. *of* DR. STERNROYD)
sir? Why, that's——

(SIR PETER *lays his hand on* BROOKE'S *arm*
puts his finger to his lips.)

STERNROYD. I do not wonder at your sur
Yes, Ladies and Gentlemen, they are some
found in the alluvial deposit of the Thames.

BROOKE. Well, I'm——!

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(*Again* SIR PETER *silences him.*)

STERNROYD. But even my friend, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who collects them, does not possess so perfect a specimen!

MRS. POSKETTT. But—Doctor——!

(SIR PETER *motions the whole group to silence.*)

STERNROYD. Ah, you don't understand the value of these things. Out of this fragment it is possible to reconstruct an entire epoch. Yes, yes! (*crosses* L.) I shall read a paper on it.—Ah, if only my dear wife, my beloved Araminta, were here to see it! (*He shuffles off into No.* 3)

(JANE *re-enters* R. U. E. *with the baby. Comes slowly along the pavement.*)

BROOKE. Amazing! (*To* SIR PETER) Why wouldn't you let me tell him!

SIR PETER. Ah, Brooke! We all live on our illusions. The more we believe, the happier we are!

RUTH. How true!

(*Enter* CAROLINE THRING *followed by a footman.*)

JIM. (*Shouting*) Admiral! Pirate in the offing!

(*All turn.*)

SIR PETER. Ah? Who's this, now?

CAROLINE. (*To* EYESORE) Fellow! is this Pomander Lane? (EYESORE *doesn't answer*) Extraordinary! (*To* JIM) Fellow! is this Pomander Lane?

JIM. You've lost your bearin's, mam!

CAROLINE. What savages! (*To* BROOKE-HOSKYN) You! Is this Pomander Lane?

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BROOKE. This, mam, is Pomander *Walk!*

CAROLINE. Oh, well, same thing! (*Coming* L. C.)

SIR PETER. (*Indignant*) Excuse me, mam——!

CAROLINE. (*Addressing everybody*) My good people, I have been appointed District Visitor for this part of your Parish. District Visitor, to give advice and distribute alms. (*General disgust. She turns to* RUTH) Where are your children?

RUTH. I am a spinster!

CAROLINE. Are there no children? (*Sees* JANE *with the baby*) Ah, yes. (*To* SIR PETER *and* MRS. POSKETT) Father and mother, I suppose.

SIR PETER. Gobblessmysoul!

(*And* MRS. POSKETT *is speechless with indignation.*)

BROOKE. This, mam, is my youngest—the youngest of three.

JANE. Four, master.

BROOKE. Four—I haven't counted them lately.

CAROLINE. I will give your wife instructions about their management. (*Crosses to* R. C.)

BROOKE. You'll—Ha, ha!—She'll teach Selina! Ho ho!

CAROLINE. (*To* MARJOLAINE) What do I see? Curls? At *your* age? Your hair is to be quite straight when I return!

MARJOLAINE. Don't hurry me then, give me lots and lots of time.

MRS. POSKETT. (*Boiling*) Now, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER. (*To* CAROLINE) Madam—Hum—we *give* alms, and we do not take advice. You're on the wrong tack. (*Pointing to* R. U. E.) That is your course for Pomander Lane!

RUTH.
MRS. POSKETT.
BROOKE. } (*Pointing*) That!

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SIR PETER. Jim, pilot the lady out.

JIM. Ay, ay, Admiral.

CAROLINE. Very well. I see I shall have difficulty here; but I shall come again. I am not so easily beaten. I shall come again! I shall come again!

(*Exit,* JIM *leading the way.* ALL *laugh.*)

SIR PETER. I gave her her sailing orders; what?

MRS. POSKETT. What a wonderful man you are!

BASIL. Miss Marjory, it is time for our lesson.

MARJOLAINE. Yes. (*To* BARBARA) *Maman* told me to ask you to come with me.

RUTH. (*To* BARBARA) Shall I take your place, dear?

(BASIL *starts.*)

BARBARA. (*Eagerly and with her eye on* BASIL) No, no! I love to hear her!

(MARJOLAINE, BARBARA *and* BASIL *go up and stand talking together at the gate of No.* 4.)

RUTH. (*Coming down, to* MRS. POSKETT) Will you come in and have a dish of tea?

MRS. POSKETT. (*To* RUTH *and* MARJOLAINE) No, thank you. Sh! I'm going—you'll never guess!—(*Giggling*) I'm going to comb my wig!

(RUTH *goes up* L.)

SIR PETER. (*To* BROOKE) You won't play any more?

BROOKE. I think not, Sir Peter. (*Waving his hand to the upstair window of No.* 3) Selina will be expecting me.

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MRS. POSKETT. I wonder you can bear to leave her so much.

(RUTH *comes down.*)

BROOKE. It tears my heartstrings, ma'am; but she will have it so. "Brooke," she says, "your place is in the fashionable world." So I sacrifice my inclinations to her pleasure.

RUTH. How unselfish!

BROOKE. And she has many innocent pastimes. At the present moment the dear soul is joyously darning my socks.

(RUTH *goes to door of her house. Two bearers have brought a sedan to No.* 1. LORD OTFORD, *a very distinguished-looking man of forty-five, steps out of it. The bearers retire to the corner and watch the* EYESORE *fishing, to his disgust. If there is no room for the sedan,* LORD OTFORD *walks in.*)

MRS. POSKETT. Company, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER. Eh?—Gobblessmysoul!—Is it possible?—My old friend, Lord Otford! (*He hurries up, shouting*) Otford! Otford!

BROOKE. (*Has started violently*) Lord Otford, by all that's unlucky! (*He makes for No.* 3)

MRS. POSKETT. What's the matter?

BROOKE. Nothing, ma'am. (*With great dignity*) We differ in politics. There might be bloodshed! (*He hurries into No.* 3)

MRS. POSKETT. Well, I never!

(*She moves up to No.* 2. RUTH, BARBARA, MARJOLAINE *and* BASIL *are just going into No.* 4.)

OTFORD. Ah, you're looking well, Peter!

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SIR PETER. (*Shaking him by both hands*) My dear Jack! My dear old Jack! Come in!

(RUTH *exit into house followed by* BARBARA *and* BASIL.)

OTFORD. Looks pleasant under the elm.
SIR PETER. Why, come along, then!

(*They come down.*)

OTFORD. (*Alluding to* MRS. POSKETT, *whom they have just passed*) I say, Peter! In clover, you rascal!
SIR PETER. Dam fine woman—what?
OTFORD. (*Alluding to* MARJOLAINE, *who is in the doorway of No.* 4) Ay, and pretty girl on doorstep! (*Arrested*) By Jove!
SIR PETER. Dainty little thing, eh?

(*Exit* MARJOLAINE.)

OTFORD. (*Lost in thought*) Yes—reminds me vaguely—(*Change*) Well! You're hale and hearty!
SIR PETER. Nothing amiss with you, neither. I *am* glad to see you! Thought you was in Russia.
OTFORD. Got home a month ago. Not married yet?
SIR PETER. Peter Antrobus married? No, my lad. All women, yes. One woman—no!
OTFORD. Sure nobody can hear us?

(*They come to seat under tree.*)

SIR PETER. No, no.
OTFORD. Peter, I want your advice and help.
SIR PETER. Woman?

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OTFORD. Yes. Not my woman, thoug
time. It's about my boy—Jack.

SIR PETER. Aha! Chip of the old b
what?

OTFORD. No, no. Marriage.

SIR PETER. Gobblessmysoul! How old is

OTFORD. Twenty-three.

SIR PETER. *Good* Lord!

OTFORD. I want to see Jack settled. Ther
succession to think of.

SIR PETER. (*Laughing*) You talk as t
you was a King!

OTFORD. (*Laughing*) So I am, in a smal
Think of the estate! I want Jack to take the

SIR PETER. How can he, when he's on th

OTFORD. He's to retire as soon as he g
captaincy.

SIR PETER. (*Jumping up*) *Retire!*—now
Bony ready to gobble us up!

OTFORD. Don't you see? With all this
and bloodshed, now's the time for Jack to gi
a grandson. Why, hang it, man! If he
die without issue, the title and the estate wo
to that Whig scoundrel, James Sayle.

SIR PETER. That won't do.

OTFORD. Of course it won't. Now there
Wendover's gel—Caroline Thring.

SIR PETER. What! Caroline Thring!
heard of her—eccentric party. And didn't
there was an affair with young Beauchamp?

OTFORD. That's fallen through. She's a
mable person—goes about doing good—distri
alms—District visiting——

SIR PETER. (*Starts*) District visiting!—
a glance at R. U. E.) Well, well, but——

OTFORD. (*Impatiently*) Let me finish.—
over's willing, and there's nothing in the way
estates join. She's sole heiress. Gad, sir!

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alliance would make Jack the biggest man in the three kingdoms!

SIR PETER. Is Jack fond of her?

OTFORD. Doesn't object to her. Hesitates. Says he don't want to marry at all. Says he hasn't had his fling.

SIR PETER. Well—what's it all got to do with me?

OTFORD. Ever since Jack's been home on leave, he's done nothing but talk about you.

SIR PETER. Good lad! I loved him when he was a middy with me on the Termagent.

OTFORD. He loves *you*. Coming to look you up. When he comes, refer to Caroline; carelessly. Say what a fine gel she is.

SIR PETER. But I've never set eyes on her!

OTFORD. Doesn't matter. Don't say a word about the estate. Refer to young Beauchamp. Say, in your time young fellers didn't let other young fellers cut 'em out. See?

SIR PETER. You're a wily fox, Jack. But, heark'ee! Sure he's not in love with anybody else?

OTFORD. He says he isn't. Oh, there may be a Spanish Señorita!—Gad, I should be almost ashamed of him, if there wasn't! But there's no

---

SIR PETER. (*Meaningly*) No Lucy Pryor, what?

OTFORD. (*Wincing*) No. (*Sadly*) No Lucy Pryor.

SIR PETER. (*Contritely*) I beg your pardon, Jack; I'm sorry.

OTFORD. It still hurts, Peter. Like an old bullet. Well, you'll do what you can, eh? I don't want you to *over*-do it. Just edge him in the right direction.

SIR PETER. Keep his eye in the wind, what?

OTFORD. That's it. (*Rises and crosses* L.) Well? Any newcomers in the Walk?

SIR PETER. (*Laughing*) Yes, two oil-lamps.

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They wanted to give us their new-fangled, stinking gas, but the whole Walk mutinied.

OTFORD. Very fine, but——

SIR PETER. Only used when there's no moon.

OTFORD. But I meant people.

SIR PETER. People? Yes. A French widow and her daughter.

OTFORD. French, eh? (*Pointing to No.* 4) What, the little gel I saw going in?

SIR PETER. Yes. (*Takes* OTFORD *down* R., *away from houses*) They're not French; but the mother's the widow of a Frenchman. Madame Lachesnais.*

OTFORD. Pleasant?

SIR PETER. De-lightful. The Walk was shy of 'em at first. So was I. Thought they were Foreigners. All very well for you and me, Jack, but think of Mrs. Poskett! Think of the Misses Pennymint! Think of the Brooke-Hoskyns!

OTFORD. Eh? Who's that?

SIR PETER. Sh! Number three. Very distinguished man.

OTFORD. Man of family?

SIR PETER. Gobblessmysoul, yes. Four little gels; eldest four years old; there'll be another directly. Moves in the highest circles. Hote tonn, Jack. Dines in town regularly four times a week. Never met him?

OTFORD. I seem to remember a man called Hoskyn.

SIR PETER. This is Brooke—hum—Hoskyn: with a hyphen.

OTFORD. Well—go on about the French widow.

(SIR PETER *sits under tree.*)

SIR PETER. Well, one morning their chaise was

*La-sher-ney, 'fiddle yllable very short.

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signalled from the back of the Misses Pennymint. Chaises can't get beyond the corner of (*Points to it*) Pomander Lane; so I had time to put on my uniform, and my medals, and my cocked hat.

OTFORD. You meant to show 'em you were Admiral on your own quarter-deck, eh?

SIR PETER. (*Sits beside him*) That's it. And then—well, then Madame came round the corner, and then Mr. Vermersell. They didn't walk, Jack; they floated. And what did I do? I just sneaked back into harbour, and struck my colours. Yes!—She was the most gracious creature I had ever seen. And the gel—well, you saw *her*. They brought something new into the Walk.

OTFORD. What d'you mean?

SIR PETER. (*With a touch of pathos*) We're rather an elderly lot, y'know. Beyond our springtime, Jack, and that's the truth. When we sit and think, we think of the past, and try not to think of the future. And suddenly, here was this Grace and Beauty and Youth in the midst of us. It gave the Walk a shock, I can tell ye. All the women lay-to in repairing-dock for days. Mrs. Poskett never showed her nose till she had got a new wig from town; Pringle tells me he caught poor Barbara Pennymint looking at herself in the glass, and crying; and Brooke-Hoskyn says his wife, who was watching 'em come, sobbed her heart out, and made him swear he loved her.

OTFORD. By Jove! You make me want to see these paragons.

SIR PETER. Madame's gone shopping. (*Rises*) She'll be back directly. Wait, and I'll present you.

OTFORD. (*Moving up. The Sedan-bearers get ready*) Not to-day. I'm on my way to old Wendover.

SIR PETER. (*Accompanying him*) Ah, that marriage?

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OTFORD. Yes, to clinch it. When Ja
Peter, you'll do what I ask?

SIR PETER. Yes, yes. Well, I hope
Jack soon.

OTFORD. (*Shaking hands, and gettin*
sedan) You'll do what you can?

SIR PETER. (*Walking with the sedan t*
the corner) I will. I will. God bless
turns and sees MARJOLAINE *coming out*
There now, Missie!—A moment earlie
have presented you to a very great man.

MARJOLAINE. Oh?

SIR PETER. (*Confidentially*) I sa
have a go at that hornpipe by-and-
(*He goes into No.* 1, *humming the hor*
sketching its step)

(MARJOLAINE *crosses to the elm. Sits*
opens her book, and reads. Mu
amazement of the EYESORE, *a small*
up at POMANDER STEPS. JACK SAYL
lad of 23, *makes it fast and lands. H*
uniform of a naval lieutenant, but
coat on his arm, and puts it on as he
the houses. He comes down the W
ining all the houses. Presently he
MARJOLAINE *and sees her. He st*
unconsciously staring with frank a
MARJOLAINE *sees him out of the cor*
eye; fidgets with her book; tries to r
shuts the book with a bang, and gets
nant.)

JACK. (*Involuntarily*) I beg your pa

MARJOLAINE. (*On her dignity, ver*
trying to look six feet tall) Why?

JACK. (*Laughing*) Oh!—I'm so gla
"Why!"

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MARJOLAINE. (*Genuinely puzzled, and a little off her guard*) Why?

JACK. (*Good naturedly*) Well, if you'd said "There's no occasion;" or if you hadn't said anything, our conversation would have been finished, you know.

MARJOLAINE. (*Matter-of-fact*) It *is* finished. (*She moves to go*)

JACK. (*Holding up his hand*) No. It's my turn to ask *you* a question.

MARJOLAINE. Eh—? (*"hein?"*)

JACK. I'm Jack Sayle, at your service. I'm a lieutenant in the Navy; and I've just rowed down from Richmond—three miles. I'm home on leave; and I'm looking for an old friend.

MARJOLAINE. All that is very interesting, but it isn't a question.

JACK. (*Rather injured*) I thought it was polite to tell you who I was.—It's uncommon hot, and when I saw this terrace, I said there'd be sure to be one here. Is there?

MARJOLAINE. (*Impatient*) What?

JACK. An inn.

MARJOLAINE. Certainly not. (*Crosses towards No.* 5)

JACK. Can't you tell me where there is one?

MARJOLAINE. I do not frequent them.

JACK. No?—Sorry.—I *am* dry. You see, I've rowed all the way from Richmond—five miles.

MARJOLAINE. (*Resisting a desire to laugh*) I'm afraid you'll have to row all the way back again. *Good* afternoon. (*She moves towards house*)

JACK. (*Pensively*) Curious, how different everything is!

MARJOLAINE. (*Arrested at gate*) Different what is?

JACK. Why, if I'd met an old gentleman outside his house in Spain, and he'd seen how I was suffer-

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ing, he'd have said his house was mine. (*Sits under tree*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Indignant*) I am not an old gentleman; I haven't any house in Spain, and it's a shame to say I'm inhospitable.

JACK. I didn't. I only said it was different.

MARJOLAINE. (*Hesitating*) Are you really suffering?

JACK. (*Grinning*) Intolerably. (*Groaning*) Look at my face!

MARJOLAINE. I can't ask you in, because *Maman* and Nanette are out.

JACK. (R. C.) It's of no consequence. (*With the air of a martyr*) I must row back. Seven miles. Against the tide. Ah, well!

MARJOLAINE. I'm sure *Maman* would ask you in, if she was here.

JACK. I'm *quite* sure of that.

MARJOLAINE. And I think she would not like me to be, as you say, inhospitable.

JACK. I didn't say it; but I'm quite sure she wouldn't.

MARJOLAINE. I might—I might bring you out something——

JACK. (*With assumed indifference*) Oh, don't trouble.

MARJOLAINE. But what would the neighbours say, if they saw me feeding an entire stranger?

JACK. But I'm not. (*Jumps up*) I've told you my name. That's as much as anybody ever knows about anybody.

MARJOLAINE. (*Examining the Walk*) Number One's asleep; Number two's combing her wig; Number three's nursing his wife; Dr. Sternroyd doesn't matter; and the Eyesore's got his back turned. I'll risk it. (*Turns to go in, then comes back*) What would you like?

JACK. Oh, my dear young lady!—It's not for me to say. Anything *you* offer me—*any*thing!

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MARJOLAINE. (*Ticking them off on her fingers*) We have elderberry wine—cowslip wine—red-currant wine—and gooseberry wine—(JACK'S *face has grown longer and longer. She sees it*) Oh, you *do* look ill! Which do you say?

JACK. I've been brought up very simply. I should never think of saying any of those. Haven't you any beer?

MARJOLAINE. Beer! How low!

JACK. I know; but——

MARJOLAINE. (*Contemptuously*) We have no beer.

JACK. And this is England! I mean——

MARJOLAINE. I know! There's *Maman's* claret. She takes it for her health. (*Triumphantly*) What do you say to *that?*

JACK. (*In despair*) Oh, it's better than (*Enthusiastically*) than beer.

MARJOLAINE. Ah! Now, will you wait a minute (*Pointing to bench*) Here?

(MRS. POSKETT *looks out of her window.*)

JACK. I'll wait hours, anywhere.

MARJOLAINE. (*Seeing* MRS. POSKETT) No! Better! Go into the gazebo.

JACK. Into the what?

MARJOLAINE. (*Motioning him to the summer-house*) There: the summer-house. (*He goes in*) And keep quite still. (*She lays her book on the bench in the summer-house*)

JACK. I say! You *will* come back? You're not going to leave me here to perish of thirst?

MARJOLAINE. That would be a good joke!

JACK. I'll carve your name while you're gone.

MARJOLAINE. No, you won't!

JACK. Why not?

MARJOLAINE. Because you don't know it! *Voilà!* (*She trips laughing into No.* 5)

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JACK. (*Watching her; pensively, to himself*) By George! By George! By George! (*He picks up the book. Looks at the fly-leaf*) Aha! "Lucy Pryor"!—Lucy Pryor! (*He gets his knife out and begins carving an* L. BROOKE-HOSKYN *opens his upstair window; he is in his shirtsleeves and is smoking a pipe. He speaks to someone in the room*)

BROOKE. What a pity, my dearest Selina, you are temporarily deprived of the use of your limbs. The Walk is at its best. The river is flowing by.—What? It always does?—Why check my musings?—Not a living thing is in sight, (*The* EYESORE *scratches his back*) except the Eyesore; and he enhances the beauty of his surroundings by contrast. My smoke does not incommode you, my own?—you can *bear* it?—Dear soul, who am I, to deprive you of an innocent pleasure? (*At this moment* MARJOLAINE *comes out of No.* 5 *with a bottle, a tumbler, and a cake on a plate.* BROOKE-HOSKYN *is much interested. To himself*) Hulloa! (*To* MARJOLAINE) Why, Miss Marjory——!

MARJOLAINE. (*Nearly letting everything drop and coming to a dead stop*) Oh!

(JACK *is excited. He and* MARJOLAINE *exchange signals.*)

BROOKE. Is your mother in the arbour?

MARJOLAINE. Yes—no!

BROOKE. Indeed? Then why this genteel reflection? (*Speaking off*) Yes, my own; I am speaking to Miss Marjory.

MARJOLAINE. (*As bold as you please*) I always take a little refreshment at this hour.

BROOKE. How singularly unobservant I am! I have never noticed it. Wait one moment. I'll come and help you.

(JACK *expresses his determinction to kill* BROOKE.)

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MARJOLAINE. (*Hastily*) No, thank you. I am sure your wife wants you. (*Viperishly*) She sees so little of you. (*She hurries into the summer-house, motioning* JACK *to keep still*)

BROOKE. (*Leaning out of the window, and trying to see into the summer-house*) Curious. Very curious.

MARJOLAINE. (*In a tragic whisper*) Did you hear him?

JACK. (*Similarly*) If he comes here, I'll punch his head.

MARJOLAINE. Be quiet!

(*They both stand listening.*)

BROOKE. (*Speaking off*) No, my dear, of course I didn't mean to go!—*Do* you think her an ugly little thing?—Matter of taste.—Oh, come! Not jealous!—Hold your hand? (*Viciously*) Certainly, if you wish it. (*As he knocks out his pipe and closes the window*) Damn!

MARJOLAINE. (*Hearing the window close*) Thank goodness. (*To* JACK) Now you see what you've done!

JACK. 'Pon my honour, I've done nothing. Just waited hours!

MARJOLAINE. (*Arranging the wine, etc., on the bench*) Hours!

JACK. It seemed hours, Miss (*With emphasis*) Lucy Pryor!

MARJOLAINE. Lucy Pryor? Oh, you got that out of the book! That was *Maman's* name before she married. *My* name's Lachesnais.

JACK. (*Not understanding*) Beg pardon——?

MARJOLAINE. (*Very distinctly*) La-ches-nais. Marjolaine Lachesnais.

JACK. Are you French? (*He moves tray to his right*)

MARJOLAINE. My father was. (*She has filled*

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a tumbler with claret, which she offers him) Never mind about that. Make haste.

JACK. (*Holding the tumbler*) Marjolaine—that means Marjoram, doesn't it? (*Rises to drink*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Interested*) Do you know French?

JACK. (*Inadvisedly taking a gulp of claret, which nearly kills him*) Brrr!—I beg pardon!—O Lord!—know French?—Very little.—Marjoram—Sweet Marjoram—how appropriate!

MARJOLAINE. You are not drinking. It is *Maman's* claret.

JACK. Does she—does she take this for her health?

MARJOLAINE. Yes. You said you were thirsty.

JACK. It's a wonderful wine. Quenches your thirst at once.

MARJOLAINE. Take some cake.

JACK. (*Breaks a piece off*) I say! You must eat, too, or I shall feel greedy. (*He breaks his piece in two and gives half to her. They sit munching like children, with their feet dangling.* JACK, *with his mouth full*) I shall call you Marjory.

MARJOLAINE. (*Similarly*) They all do.

JACK. (*Jealous*) Do they? Who?

MARJOLAINE. (*Carelessly*) Oh—the neighbours. (*Indicating the Walk with the cake*)

JACK. Impudence. (*He recovers*) I say! Isn't this delightful!

MARJOLAINE. It's very strange. Do you know, you are the first young man I've ever spoken to in all my life?

JACK. No!—That's first-rate!

MARJOLAINE. (*Astonished*) Why?

JACK. Oh—I don't know. I hate young men.

MARJOLAINE. But *you* are young!

JACK. (*Rather hurt*) Me?—No!—I'm twenty-three.

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MARJOLAINE. I'm much younger. Only seventeen. Here, everybody is—Oh!—so old!

JACK. Poor little girl!

MARJOLAINE. (*Astonished*) Why?

JACK. Must be so lonely.

MARJOLAINE. (*She has got rid of the cake by this time*) Oh, no! One cannot feel lonely where there's a river. (*Dreamily*) Twice every day it brings news: down from the meadows, where the flowers are, and the cattle, standing knee-deep in its margin, and the—*demoiselles*—how do you say?—dragonflies—and the willows dipping their branches in it; and then it comes back from the great town, and sings of the ships and the crowded bridges, and the King and Queen taking their pleasure in great, golden barges. And it even sings of the sea, so far away!

JACK. (*Eagerly*) Do you love the sea?

MARJOLAINE. What do I know of it? I have only crossed from Dunkerque. (*Enthusiastically*) But that was lovely! It was very rough, and I stood against the mast, and my hair blew all about, and I shouted for joy!—Oh! I should love to be a pirate!

JACK. (*Catching her mood*) Fine! Tell you what! We'll charter a ship, and sweep the seas, and bang the enemy.

MARJOLAINE. We!—Why, you're going away in a minute, and I shall never see you again.

JACK. (*Suddenly brought to earth*) Marjory—do you mean that?

MARJOLAINE. Why *should* you come again?

JACK. (*Quietly*) Think a moment. Let us both think. We are very young, and I know I'm hasty. Let us sit quite still, and think hard, whether we'd like to meet again. Let us sit and look at each other, and not speak. (*They do so. Presently her head sinks*) Well?

MARJOLAINE. (*Shyly*) I do not see why you should not come again.

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JACK. (*Earnesly*) I see why I *should!* I *must!* But it shall be differently.

MARJOLAINE. Differently——?

JACK. I mustn't come on the sly. I'll get an introduction.

MARJOLAINE. But nobody knows you! Nobody in all Pomander Walk.

JACK. (*Jumping up*) Is this Pomander Walk? (MARJOLAINE *nods*) Why, that's what I've been looking for all the afternoon! That's where my friend lives: the Admiral.

MARJOLAINE. (*Rising*) Not Sir Peter Antrobus?

JACK. Yes! Do you know him?

MARJOLAINE. Why, he's the King of the Walk! He lives at Number One. If you're quite quiet, you can hear him snoring.

JACK. Why, there we are, then! I'm introduced! I'm on a proper footing! The whole thing's shipshape. O Marjory, what a relief!

MARJOLAINE. But I don't understand——

JACK. Sir Peter's my father's oldest friend. I served under him as a middy on the Termagant. I'm very fond of him. I'll come and see him tomorrow.

MARJOLAINE. (*Clapping her hands*) And then he can introduce you to *Maman.*

JACK. Don't you see? It's grand! I'll come and see him often; every day; twice a day. If he's out, I can sit under the elm and wait for him—with you. Oh! Aren't you glad?

MARJOLAINE. (*Demurely*) I am very glad you have found your old friend.

JACK. What's to-day?

MARJOLAINE. (*Without thinking*) Quintidi. Fifth Prairial. Year thirteen——

JACK. What *are* you talking about?

MARJOLAINE. Oh, I forgot I was in England! Saturday.

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JACK. (*Crestfallen*) Then to-morrow's Sunday. Hang! Well, I'll come on Monday. Shall you be here?

MARJOLAINE. I am always here.

JACK. Be under the elm. (*Insidiously*) Shall you tell your mother about—to-day?

MARJOLAINE. (*After a slight hesitation*) On Monday, when you've been introduced.

JACK. That's it—I'll be off now. (*Taking both her hands in his*) Good-bye. Oh, but it's good to be alive! It's good to be young! The river is good, that brought me here! The sun is good, that made me thirsty!

MARJOLAINE. And the claret was good?

JACK. The claret? Nectar!

MARJOLAINE. Finish it then.

JACK. Oh, no, thank you! (*Sees her look of surprise*) Oh, yes. (*Drinks it off with silent heroism*) Good-bye, little Marjory: till Monday!

MARJOLAINE. (*Wistfully*) You think you will come?

JACK. Think!

(*Muffin-bell heard off.*)

MARJOLAINE. Slip to your boat quickly! (*She gives a cry of alarm. For the* MUFFIN-MAN *has come round the corner with his tray on his head, ringing his bell. As if by magic the whole Walk comes to life. Heads are at all the windows.* JIM *comes out of No.* 1, *with* SIR PETER *behind him.* MRS. POSKETT *appears at her door;* RUTH *at hers;* JANE *comes out of No.* 3, *with the baby in her arms; and* BROOKE-HOSKYN *opens the upstair window. Even* DOCTOR STERNROYD *shuffles out, plate in hand. All buy muffins*)

JACK. Dash it! What's that?

MARJOLAINE. Keep still! It's the muffin-man!

JACK. I'm off!

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MARJOLAINE. Wait! (*She peeps through the bushes. With horror*) Jack!

JACK. (*Delighted at being called by his name*) Ah! (*Then anxiously*) What?

MARJOLAINE. The whole Walk's awake! Look!

JACK. (*With his head close to hers*) I can't see. Your hair's in the way. Don't move! By Jove! There's old Antrobus!

MARJOLAINE. (*In distress*) All of them! All of them!

JACK. They're all buying muffins! Greedy pigs! They won't see me!

MARJOLAINE. Yes, they will. Let me go first. I'll set them talking; then you can slip away. (*Suddenly she gives a scream*) Oh! Oh!

(MADAME *and* NANETTE *come round the corner.* BROOKE-HOSKYN *comes out of No.* 3.)

JACK. What?

MARJOLINE. *Maman* and Nanette! They must not come here! I can't explain you before the whole Walk! Is my hair straight? (*Going*)

JACK. Lovely! Monday?

MARJOLAINE. I'm frightened!

JACK. (*Insisting*) Monday?

MARJOLAINE. Yes! Yes! (*She dashes out of the summer-house, almost into* BROOKE-HOSKYN'S *arms*)

BROOKE. Ah, Miss Marjory! I'll fetch the things for you.

MARJOLAINE. (*In agony*) No, no!

MADAME. (*Calling*) Marjolaine!

MARJOLAINE. (*Throwing up her hands in despair*) *Me voilà, Maman chèrie!* (*She runs up to her mother, and becomes feverishly active in keeping the inhabitants of the Walk together.* BROOKE-HOSKYN *comes solemnly up to the summer-house, and sees* JACK, *who is peering through the hedge*)

BROOKE. (*Slapping him on the back*) So—so!

JACK. (*Turns suddenly*) What the devil—?

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(*With amazement*) Hoskyn! By all that's amazing! Old Hoskyn!

BROOKE. (*With the utmost surprise and discomfort*) You, sir! You!

JACK. Hoskyn! What the devil are you doing here?

BROOKE. (*Like a well-trained servant*) Beg pardon, sir. (*Tries to go*)

JACK. (*Stopping him*) No, no, Hoskyn; you don't get off so easily. What are you doing here?

BROOKE. (*Doggedly*) I'm living here, sir.

JACK. The doose you are! Well, you're in the nick of time. Be a good fellow and fetch my hat out of the boat, without letting all those people see you.

BROOKE. (*Firmly, but respectfully*) I'm very sorry, Master Jack; I can't do that.

JACK. Why not?

BROOKE. I'm looked up to here, sir. I should lose prestige.

JACK. I say, Hoskyn, what's your little game?

BROOKE. (*Fiercely*) What is yours, sir?

JACK. What the devil do you mean?

BROOKE. (*Pointing to the wine and cake*) I mean—this?

JACK. What of it? What do you insinuate?

BROOKE. It ain't right, sir. I won't help you. I'll be damned if I do!

JACK. Do you mean I'm doing something underhand?

BROOKE. Well—ain't you, sir?

JACK. I'll devilish soon show you!

BROOKE. (*Trying to stop him; terrified*) Don't betray me, sir! Don't sir!

JACK. (*Thrusting him aside*) Out of my way!

BROOKE. Good Lord! He'll tell the whole Walk! (*He stands and watches. Meanwhile most people have bought their muffins and are retiring.* RUTH *detains* MADAME. *The* MUFFIN-MAN *has got as far*

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as No. 3 where DOCTOR STERNROYD *is choosing his muffins with particular care.* BARBARA *sees* JACK *approaching*)

BARBARA. A stranger——!

RUTH. (*Calls to the* ADMIRAL, *who is just going into his house*) Sir Peter! (*She points to the intruder*)

SIR PETER. (*Very important*) Now, sir—*May* I ask—? (*He recognises* JACK) G bblessmysoul! What a coincidence! (*Shaking hands violently*) I'm delighted to see you, my lad! (MADAME *comes slowly down*) De-lighted. (*To* MADAME) Madame Lachesnais! Let me make you acquainted! My gallant young friend, the Honourable Jack Sayle, son of my old friend, Lord——

(JIM *appears in upper window.*)

MADAME. (*With a cry*) Marjolaine——!

(MRS. POSKETT *goes to* MADAME. MARJOLAINE *runs to her mother.* MADAME *sinks into* MARJOLAINE'S *and* MRS. POSKETT'S *arms. Stupor.*)

MRS. POSKETT. Salts! Quick!

(BARBARA *runs into house for a glass of water. The women crowd round* MADAME.)

SIR PETER. (*Hurriedly*) Get away, Jack!

JACK. (*Nonplussed*) But——!

SIR PETER. Away with you! Discretion! They'll have to unhook her!

CURTAIN.

(*Picture.* MADAME *is placed on seat* C, *the women round her.* BARBARA *comes with glass of water which she hands to* MARJOLAINE *is kneeling by her mother. The* ADMIRAL, *with his back to the group, is waving, in the direction of the river, to* JACK, *who has disappeared.*)

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ACT II.

LIGHTING ACT II.

All whites borders and foots full up
R. 2 Amber spots
R. White olivettes
L. None
Back 1 White olivette

CUES.

Page 81. Jack I am the one girl in the world you can never marry.
(Begin to blind spots and olivettes slowly, one after the other.)

Page 83. Do you know any bishops?
(Spots, etc., are blinded now)

Page 85. We want to get married and you've got to get us a licence.
(Shower over now and all lights come on gradually.)

PROPERTIES FOR ACT II.

OFF STAGE R.
Drowned cat in net and three fishes
Rug hanging on railings of No. 5
Stick to beat rug by railings
Cat on stage almost hidden from the audience by the gazebo.

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ACT II.

(Saturday morning, June 1st, 1805.)

SCENE:—*It is about midday; a showery and breezy morning. The shadows shift as the clouds are swept along. The* EYESORE *is fishing as usual.* BROOKE-HOSKYN, *in his shirt sleeves, is brushing his hair in his upstairs room. The window is open.* NANETTE, *as curtain rises, is beating a rug which is hanging on railings of No 5.* JANE *comes out hurriedly and remonstrates, and then* JIM *rushes out, also scolding her.*

BROOKE. Jane, Jane. (JIM, JANE *and* NANETTE *immediately scuttle off into their respective houses.* BROOKE *speaks into the room*) But, my own Selina, what was I to do? Be reasonable. I only wrote and told his lordship th boy was carrying on a clandestine love affair.—I did not even sign the letter.—None of my business? Now, Selina! If I hadn't wrote, he'd have come again, and all would have been disclosed. We should have been obleeged to leave the Walk!—Drat the Walk?—O fie! That is not how my ring-dove customarily coos.—Soft words butter no parsnips!—O Selina! Does my Selina think she's in her kitchen? No I am not a brute.—Yes, I know I have made Miss Marjory very unhappy, but we *must* make people unhappy, if we're to be happy ourselves. I'm sorry for her. Very sorry. She's a sweet creature. (*Noise of broken crockery*) There you go again! You scold me for making her unhappy, and you scold me for being sorry. There's no pleasing you! (MARJOLAINE *has come out of No. 5. She is pale and*

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miserable. BROOKE-HOSKYN *sees her*) Ah, Miss Marjory? (*Speaking off*) I *must* speak to her; it's only polite. Don't snivel. (*To* MARJOLAINE) You are looking a little pale.

MARJOLAINE. (*With a toss*) I never felt better in my life.

BROOKE. But more like the lily than the rose. (*Off*) No; I am not talking nonsense!

MARJOLAINE. How is Mrs. Brooke-Hoskyn this morning?

BROOKE. In the highest spirits. Her gaiety is infectious. (*Off*) Don't snivel: she'll hear you! (*In despair*) O Lord! (*To* MARJOLAINE) Excuse me; Selina wants to tell me a joke—High spirits you know—high spirits. (*Off; impatiently*) You really *are!*—(*Slams the window and disappears*)

(MARJOLAINE *looks desolately up and down the river. Almost makes up her mind to speak to the* EYESORE, *but he scratches his back at that moment, and her pride revolts. She comes half way across the lawn, towards the elm* R. C. SIR PETER *appears at his upstair window, hanging out the thrush.*)

SIR PETER. Missie, ahoy!

MARJOLAINE. (*Turning*) Oh, Sir Peter! You made me jump!

SIR PETER. Sent a shot across your bows—what?

MARJOLAINE. How's the thrush?

SIR PETER. Peaky—peaky and nervous. That confounded cat next door's been watching him. Where is he now?

MARJOLAINE. (*Pointing to the shrub near the* EYESORE) Quite safe. There.

SIR PETER. (*Leaning out*) Where?

MARJOLAINE. (*Crossing to bush*) Oh, I can't shout it! (*Points again*)

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SIR PETER. Oh, *there?*

MARJOLAINE. (*Nodding*) 'M. Are you very busy? Could you spare time for a little chat?

SIR PETER. With you? Hours. (*Disappears.* MARJOLAINE *comes to the elm.* SIR PETER *comes out. Looks under the shrub. Shakes his fist at it. Comes to* MARJOLAINE) He's sitting under the bush, watching the Eyesore like a tiger. Shows cats have no sense. 'Pears to think the Eyesore's going to catch a fish!—(*Coming down*) Ha! Never caught a fish in his born days! Now, Missie, what can I do for you?

MARJOLAINE. Talk to me.

SIR PETER. (*Flattered*) Ah!—Tell ye what! If we had a fiddler here, we might practise the hornpipe! (*Takes her hands and does a few steps; she is quiet and despondent*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Anxiously*) No! No!—Not to-day!

SIR PETER. (*Looking at her with surprise*) Oh?—In the doldrums?

MARJOLAINE. (*Impulsively*) Sir Peter, was you ever broken-hearted?

SIR PETER. Lord bless your pretty eyes, yes; every time I left port!

MARJOLAINE. Oh, but did the world seem like an empty husk, and did you want to sit down and cry your eyes out?

SIR PETER. Well, ye see, I could only have cried one eye out, anyhow.

MARJOLAINE. And what did you do? How did you cure yourelf?

SIR PETER. With a jorum of rum to be sure!

MARJOLAINE. Oh! I can't do that!

SIR PETER. What? Are *you* broken-hearted?

MARJOLAINE. I? Certainly not! Only, somebody—somebody's broken their word. That's all.

SIR PETER. Look at that, now! But I'll cure you! I'll tell you a story. (*Sits*) Something

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funny? How I lost my eye, what? Ye see, it was on board the Termagant——

MARJOLAINE. When you was with Nelson?

SIR PETER. Ay; at Copenhagen, year Eighteen-one.

MARJOLAINE. I suppose you had many officers under you?

SIR PETER. Hundreds! Well, when I say hundreds—Ha! I was somebody then!—but this infernal government——

MARJOLAINE. (*Soothingly*) Dear Sir Peter!—and I suppose some of them were quite *young* officers——?

SIR PETER. Middies? Lord love you, I took no notice of *them!* Passel o' powder-monkeys. Not but what Jack Sayle——

MARJOLAINE. (*Indifferently*) Jack what?

SIR PETER. *You* know. Young feller I presented to your mother a week ago. Time she swooned.

MARJOLAINE. O yes!

SIR PETER. Gobblessmysoul!—I was quite startled.

MARJOLAINE. Was *he* on your ship?

SIR PETER. Ay, was he; and a fine young feller, too! Of course, you was much too agitated to notice him last Saturday. Gad! I wonder he hasn't been to see me all this week. Promised he would.

MARJOLAINE. (*Eagerly*) Did he?

SIR PETER. He did. There, he's only on leave, and he has heavy social duties. Son of Lord Otford, y'know.

MARJOLAINE. (*Amazed*) Lord Otford——?

SIR PETER. (*Rising*) Ay, ay—my old friend. Otford's selfish about him. Ye see, the boy'll come into a great estate; and the old man's anxious about his marriage.

MARJOLAINE. (*Breathlessly*) Whose?

SIR PETER. Jack's, to be sure. Lord! They marry 'em now before they're out o' their swaddling

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clothes. Otford's in a hurry to secure the succession—(*This not being a subject to discuss with a young girl, he pulls himself up*) H'm—Honourable Caroline Thring.

MARJOLAINE. (*Repeats*) Caroline Thring. (*Under her breath*)

SIR PETER. Daughter and sole heiress of Lord Wendover. There's a match. Goes about doing good—like the party last Saturday—but the two estates'll cover the county.

MARJOLAINE. (*Who can't stand much more of it rises and goes* L.) I think—I think I saw Sempronius stirring.

SIR PETER. (*Going up a few steps*) Damn that cat! (*Exit* EYESORE) Beg pardon!—I'll—! No, he's quiet. (*Comes back*) Gobblessmysoul! I've been boring you about a young feller you don't know. (MARJOLAINE *turns her face from him. Taking her by the shoulders and turning her. With surprise*) Do you?—(*With suspicion*) *Do you?* Here, I say, young woman! Look me in the eye—*this* eye.

MARJOLAINE. I—I—I have seen him once.

SIR PETER. Have you, begad!—So that's what he was up to, eh? (*Indignantly*) But I'll teach him!

MARJOLAINE. Sir Peter! If you breathe it, I'll never speak to you again!

SIR PETER. D'ye think I'll have him coming here——!

MARJOLAINE. But he's not! Don't you see he's not? Swear you won't breathe it to a soul! Swear! Swear!

SIR PETER. Damme. I must think that over! And as for you, I'll talk to you like a Dutch uncle—

(MRS. POSKETT *opens her window.*)

MARJOLAINE. Sir Peter! Sempronius is going to jump!

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SIR PETER. (*Hurrying up*) What!

(MRS. POSKETT *thrusts her head out of her window.*)

MRS. POSKETT. Good morning, Sir Peter.

(MARJOLAINE *sits* R. C.)

SIR PETER. (*Gruffly*) 'Morning, ma'am. Your cat——

MRS. POSKETT. Sh!—Dear Sempronius!—Don't disturb him! He's so happy!

SIR PETER. But——!

MRS. POSKETT. I'm sure it's going to rain. (*Enter* MADAME *from No.* 5) He always sits there when he feels rain coming; because the fish rise, and he loves watching them.

SIR PETER. Confounded nonsense!—(*He is coming back to the elm, but sees* MADAME *come out of No.* 5 *and cross to* MARJOLAINE) O, hang!—(*He goes into No.* 1)

(*Meanwhile* MARJOLAINE, *seated under the tree, has bent her head lower and lower over her book.* MADAME *nods pleasantly to* SIR PETER *and* MRS. POSKETT, SIR PETER *and* MRS. POSKETT *disappear.*)

MADAME. (*Crosses towards river, turns, and sees* MARJOLAINE, *comes quietly up to her, very gently*) Marjolaine! (*Gets* L. *of her*)

MARJOLAINE. (*With a sudden gasping sob, hides her face in her mother's dress*) O *Maman!*

MADAME. (*Sitting beside her* L., *and folding her in her arms*) *Chèrie*—my darling! What is the matter?

MARJOLAINE. (*Rises, struggling with her emotion*) Nothing, Mother. I shall be better directly.

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MADAME. Cry, Marjolaine—Do you think I have not been watching you all this week? (*Sits* C.) Cry, my darling, and tell me.

(MARJOLAINE *sits* R. C.)

MARJOLAINE. There is nothing to tell, Mother. I was waiting to tell you a great secret! But the secret no longer exists. (*Buries her face again*)

MADAME. Ah, *chèrie*, you see? The secret exists; it is breaking your heart. It will hurt you and hurt you. Till you tell me.

MARJOLAINE. (*Hushed*) I can't, Mother.

MADAME. Shall I help you, Marjolaine?

MARJOLAINE. I cannot begin alone: I don't know how.

MADAME. (*Very gently*) Let us say: you were sitting here; and that stranger—that young man——

MARJOLAINE. (*Rising and moving a little* R. *suddenly let loose*) He stood over there in the sun; and he looked at me; and I looked at him and (*awed*) Mother! What happened to me? I felt as if he and I had always known each other, and as if we were alone in the world. No; as if *he* were alone in the world, and I were a part of him. And we spoke. Nothings; things that did not matter; silly things; about his being thirsty, and what I could give him. But it was only our voices speaking. I know it was only *my* voice. It was not I. I was thinking of sunshine and music and flowers. (*Pointing to the arbour*) And we went in there, and the foolish talk went on; and all the time my heart was singing! He told me his name, and my heart took it and wove music all around it and sang it, and sang it! And (*Hushed*) Mother!—I seemed to step out of childhood suddenly, into—into what, Mother? What was it?

MADAME. Alas!

MARJOLAINE. When he went, I felt as if he had

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taken me with him; my heart and my mind. He said he was coming again; but he never came, and every day I have wandered about, looking for what he had taken: looking for my life. He will never come again! He will never bring back what he has carried away! O Mother! What is it? (*Kneels by her mother* R., *and quietly cries*)

MADAME. My darling! Is it so serious as that? God help us, poor, blind things! While my child was going through the fire, I was matching silks for my embroidery!

MARJOLAINE. But it would have been the same if you had been here!

MADAME. I suppose so. There is no barrier against it! (*Puts her arms round* MARJOLAINE) Not even a mother's arms.

MARJOLAINE. What is it then, Mother?

MADAME. (*After thinking a moment*) No, I will not tell you. If I told you, it would grow stronger; and it must not. It shall not. You must win yourself back—as I did. Oh, but sooner, and more completely.

MARJOLAINE. (*Astonished*) As *you* did—?

MADAME. My dearest dear, the young never realise they are not beginning the world. Your story is mine.

MARJOLAINE. O Mother!

MADAME. Yes: but mine was longer. We lived in our dream a whole year, so my love—(MARJOLAINE *starts at the word*) had time to grow. Its roots were twined round my heart; and when he left me, and tore the roots out of me, I thought he had torn my heart out with them! (*Rises and goes* L.)

MARJOLAINE. Like me——!

MADAME. (*Looking earnestly at* MARJOLAINE) Would you like to know his name?

MARJOLAINE. (*Hushed; very tenderly*) Yes—what was it? (*Rises*)

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MADAME. Jack—Sayle.

(*Slight pause.*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Recoiling in amazement*) Mother!—I don't understand!

MADAME. The father of the boy you have seen!

MARJOLAINE. How wonderful!

MADAME. Much more wonderful things happen every day. It is much more wonderful that I can tell you this now: that I ever grew out of my love. For I loved him—! Ah, how deeply!

MARJOLAINE. (*Putting her hand on her own heart*) Mother, dear——

MADAME. What, my dearie——?

MARJOLAINE. Is this—is what I feel—*love?*

MADAME. (*Sadly crosses a little to* R.) Ah! I have betrayed myself!—I am afraid it was going to be—love.

MARJOLAINE. Going to be—! But it is!—or else—this ache? What is it?

MADAME. (*Earnestly, sits* R. *of* MARJOLAINE) Crush it *now!* Fiercely! Ruthlessly! And it will be nothing. You have only seen him once——

MARJOLAINE. Does that make any difference?

MADAME. (*Avoiding a direct answer*) You must be very brave: very determined; and put the thought of him away.

MARJOLAINE. (*Looking straight at her mother*) Mother—(*Slight pause*)—did you love my father as much as you had loved—Jack?

MADAME. (*Avoiding* MARJOLAINE'S *eyes*) Yes. Differently. He was a brave, true man. I was very proud of your father; very happy and contented. And I *am* very happy and contented now; or I shall be, when I see you have won the victory.

MARJOLAINE. (*Full of her own thoughts*) And what became of—Jack?

MADAME. (*Rises and moves a little to* R. *with o.*

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slight tinge of bitterness) Oh!—he married some great lady.

MARJOLAINE. (*With a catch of her breath, to herself*) The Hon. Caroline Thring!

MADAME. And then I went to France, and (*Obviously not speaking the truth*) I forgot him.

MARJOLAINE. (*Looking keenly at her mother*) But—Mother—if you had forgotten him, why did you swoon when you heard his name?

MADAME. (*With a sad smile*) Ah!—My little girl is become a woman! (*Lifts* MARJOLAINE'S *face and looks into it*) The innocence of the dove, and the guile of the serpent!—Come now, *chèrie*, you promise to fight?

(*People begin to appear at the doors and windows of their houses.*)

MARJOLAINE. Yes.

MADAME. You promise to conquer?

MARJOLAINE. (*Rising*) I promise to try.

MADAME. You see there can be nothing between Lord Otford's son and my daughter?

MARJOLAINE. (*Very doubtfully*) Yes.

(RUTH *enters.*)

MADAME. Try to lighten someone else's sorrow; then you will forget your own, and the roses will bloom in your cheeks again.

(RUTH *comes briskly out of No. 4 with her needle-work. She is evidently in a bad temper. She puts up her hand to see whether it is raining.*)

MADAME. Ah—! Coming into the fresh air, Miss Ruth?

RUTH. Of *course* it's going to rain! (*Sits under tree* L.)

MADAME. Oh—not yet!

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RUTH. Do you mind if I sew here? It's so lonesome when Barbara's locked up with her precious bird.

MADAME. That is so touching.

(RUTH *snorts.*)

RUTH. (*Calling*) Marjory!

(MADAME *kisses* MARJOLAINE *and goes up* R. *and round into No.* 5.)

RUTH. (*Calling again*) Marjory! (*Then searchingly*) You haven't had a singing lesson this week.

MARJOLAINE. (R., *confused*) I haven't been quite myself.

RUTH. So I saw. Anything the matter?

MARJOLAINE. (*Hastily*) Oh, nothing. Nothing to speak of.

RUTH. H'm. Barbara was quite upset.

MARJOLAINE. How sweet of her!

RUTH. Oh! Not so much about you. But she looks forward to sitting with you and Mr. Pringle when you are singing.

MARJOLAINE. Is she so fond of music?

RUTH. Bless your dear heart, no!—How could she sit with you if she were? Doesn't know one tune from another! No; it isn't that.

MARJOLAINE. What is it, then?

RUTH. (*Blowing whatever it is, away*) Pfft!—(*Suddenly*) O! grant me patience!

MARJOLAINE. (*Amazed*) Ruth!

RUTH. Well! It seems to me the whole house is bewitched—that ever I should say such a thing!

MARJOLAINE. (*Shocked*) Oh! I thought you were so happy!

RUTH. *I'm* happy enough. Because I'm not a

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fool. But what with that feller upstairs, and Barbara down, a body has no peace of her life.

MARJOLAINE. (*Interested*) Tell me!

RUTH. Ha'n't you noticed anything? No. I s'pose you're too young. Don't know what sheeps-eyes are, when you see 'em.

MARJOLAINE. Sheepseyes——?

RUTH. 'Tis'n't for me to say anything; but with him moping about the house sighing like—like I don't know what; and her moping like a hen with the pip, it's enough, as my dear mother used to say, to give a body the fantoddles.

MARJOLAINE. (*Who has been gazing towards gazebo, and remembering, eagerly*) Are *they*—are they fond of each other?

RUTH. *I* don't know!—Yes, of course they are!

MARJOLAINE. (*Simply*) Then why don't they say so?

RUTH. That's what I want to know?

MARJOLAINE. You should speak to Mr. Basil.

RUTH. *Me!*—Bless your dear heart, he'd up and run away. He's got it into his silly head he ain't good enough. He's as shy as—I don't know what.

MARJOLAINE. Perhaps if Barbara showed him she likes him—? Why don't you speak to *her?* Kindly, sympathetically.

RUTH. So I did, just now. Told her she was an idiot. She burst out crying, and went and shut herself up with that bird.

MARJOLAINE. Ah!—the old love! (*Looking toward gazebo*)

RUTH. Old frying-pan! Oh, that bird!—Marjory, there are times when I'd give anybody a four-pence ha'penny to wring that bird's neck!

MARJOLAINE. (*With a sudden idea. Excitedly*) Ruth!

RUTH. Well, I don't care. I mean it. If it wasn't for that bird——

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MARJOLAINE. I wasn't thinking of the bird!—Yes! I *was* thinking of the bird, but I wasn't thinking what you thought I was thinking!—Oh! what nonsense you make me talk! (*Crossing to* L.)

(RUTH *rises and moves* R.)

RUTH. Whatever's got into the child's head!

(SIR PETER *comes out of No.* 1. *Looks at his sweet peas, and expresses fury.*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Trying to pull* RUTH *towards No* 4) Come! Quick! Come, and tell Barbara I want her!

RUTH. What do you want *her* for?

MARJOLAINE. I mustn't tell you yet. She may refuse.

(*Enter* EYESORE, *who resumes his fishing.*)

RUTH. Bless and save us! Now your cheeks are glowing again!

MARJOLAINE. Maman said they would!—Come along!

RUTH. Wait—wait! My mouth's full of pins!

(*As they go up,* SIR PETER *meets them.*)

SIR PETER. Going in, just as I'm coming out?

MARJOLAINE. (*Laughing*) Like the little people in the cottages: you come out for rain; and I go in for sunshine. (*Goes to door*)

RUTH. How are the sweet peas coming on?

SIR PETER. (*Aside to her*) How the doose can they come on, when that everlasting cat roots 'em up every night?

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(RUTH *and* MARJOLAINE *go into No.* 4.)

SIR PETER. (*Shaking his fist at the bush*) Ohhh!

(LORD OTFORD *turns the corner.*)

OTFORD. Shaking your fist at me, Peter?

SIR PETER. Otford?

OTFORD. (*Coming down and shaking hands*) How are you? Have you a moment to spare?

SIR PETER. All day, thanks to this confounded government. (*At the elm*) What is it?

OTFORD. I'm in great trouble.

SIR PETER. Damme! You're in trouble once a week!—Come into the gazebo. (*Cross* R.)

OTFORD. The Gazebo?—(*Angrily*) Ha! very appropriate.

(*They sit in the summer-house.*)

SIR PETER. Eh? Why? (*He sits* R.)

OTFORD. (*Producing a letter*) Read this.

SIR PETER. Can't. Haven't my spy-glass on me.

OTFORD. Well, listen. (*Reads*) "My lord—It is my painful duty to inform your lordship that your son, the Honourable John Sayle, is carrying on a clandestine love-affair with Mademoiselle Marjolaine Lachesnais of Pomander Walk——"

SIR PETER. Belay, there——!

OTFORD. Wait a bit—(*Goes on reading*) "Yesterday they were together for nearly an hour in the gazebo——"

SIR PETER. (*Angrily*) When did you get that, and who wrote it?

OTFORD. It's signed "Your true friend and well-wisher"—and I had it on Sunday.

SIR PETER. Do you mean to say that damned,

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anonymous, Sabbath-breaking rag came from Pomander Walk?

OTFORD. I presume so.

SIR PETER. (*Rises and crosses to* L.) Who sent it? Show me the white-livered scoundrel, and by Jehoshaphat, I'll wring his neck!—Is it a man's writing, or a woman's?

OTFORD. It's vague. Might be anybody's.

SIR PETER. Can't be Sternroyd—Brooke-Hoskyn—Pringle—We're none of us anonymous slanderers. (*Suddenly in a hoarse whisper*) Was it the Eyesore——?

OTFORD. The Eyesore——?

SIR PETER. That scarescrow, fishing.—But what of it, Jack? You're not worried by that rubbish? Why it's a pack of lies! (*Aside*) Lord forgive me! (OTFORD *tries to speak*) Don't interrupt!—I'm here all the time. Nothing happens in Pomander Walk that I don't know. (OTFORD *moves*) Don't interrupt! I was here when Jack came last Saturday. He went back in his boat before you could say "Jack Robinson," because Madame swooned. (*Aside*) Lord forgive me!

OTFORD. (*Hotly*) Now perhaps you'll let me say it's all true!

SIR PETER. (*Raising his voice*) Do you take this blackguard's word rather than mine?

OTFORD. You confounded old porcupine, Jack's owned up to the whole thing!

SIR PETER. (*Shouting*) What!—Don't shout like that!—d'ye want the whole Walk to hear? Sit down. Tell me again, quietly.

(*They sit in the gazebo.* OTFORD L. SIR PETER R.)

OTFORD. I taxed him with it, and he owned up. He came here last Saturday: met the damned little French gel——

SIR PETER. (*Flaring up*) Jack!

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OTFORD. I'll withdraw damned. Sat an hour in this infernal what-d'ye-call-it, and thinks he's in love with her. (SIR PETER *tries to speak*) Don't interrupt! You know the Sayles when their blood's up. You can imagine the scene we had. He's as pig-headed and obstinate as——

SIR PETER. As his father!

OTFORD. Don't interrupt!—He's thrown Caroline Thring over—won't hear of her. The utmost I could get out of him was that he'd wait a week to make sure of what he calls his mind. Mind! Puppy! All the week he's gone about like a bear with a sore head. Had the impudence to refuse to speak to me. This morning he had the impudence to *speak*. And what d'ye think he said?

SIR PETER. Serves ye right, whatever it was.

OTFORD. He said, "The week's up, and I'm going to Pomander Walk."

SIR PETER. (*Delighted*) He did? Ah, ha! Good lad!

OTFORD. What?—you're mad. (*Rises and moves* L.) Think of what's at stake! Ninety-thousand acres! For the daughter of a Frenchwoman from God knows where! Who was the girl's father? Or, rather, who wasn't?

SIR PETER. (*Rising furious*) Jack!

OTFORD. I withdraw! But think of it! An Otford, taking his wife from (*Indicating the Walk in general*) these—these—Almhouses!

SIR PETER. (*Livid and speechless*) Almhouses! —Pomander Walk!—Almhouses!

OTFORD. There, there!—I withdraw Almshouses.

SIR PETER. Withdraw more, sir! How dare you come here, abusing the sweetest, brightest, most winsome——

OTFORD. I believe you're in love with her yourself.

SIR PETER. And, damme, why not? (*Crosses*

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to L.) Take care how you talk about innocent ladies you've never set eyes on!

OTFORD. That's it. That's why I'm here. You are to present me to this Madame whatever her confounded name is.

SIR PETER. In your present temper?—I'll walk the plank first. (*Pointing*) There's her house—white paint—Go and pay your respects. Your *respects*, Jack! Damme, you'll find you have to.

OTFORD. I can't go to the house alone, and you know it.

SIR PETER. Then stay away. (*Goes up*)

OTFORD. I'll stay *here*. (*Sits in gazebo*) And if Jack shows his nose——!

SIR PETER. (*Putting his head round the side of gazebo*) I shall be watching sir, and if you dare create a disturbance in Pomander Walk, I'll—damme! I'll set the Eyesore at you! (*He stumps off in a rage towards his house*)

OTFORD. Ha! (*Sits down and folds his arms in silent fury*)

(*Just as* SIR PETER *is near his door,* JACK *enters* R. U. E. *At the same moment* MADAME *comes out of No.* 5. *She faces towards the elm, and calls.*)

MADAME. Marjolaine! Marjolaine!

OTFORD. (*In the summer-house*) Aha! The mother! (*He sits up, attentive*)

SIR PETER. (*Seeing* JACK; *in a hoarse whisper*) Gobblessmysoul! Jack! (*Seizes him*) Get away!

MADAME. (*Facing her house, calls*) Nanette!

JACK. (*To* SIR PETER) Why?

NANETTE. (*Throwing open the upstair window of No.* 5) *Quoi, Madame?*

SIR PETER. (*To* JACK, *pointing frantically to the summer-house*) Your father!—There!

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MADAME. (*To* NANETTE) *Où est-donc Mademoiselle?*

NANETTE. *Je ne sais pas, Madame.*

(MADAME *looks into her ground-floor window.*)

JACK. (*To* SIR PETER) I don't care: I won't go.

SIR PETER. (*Pointing to his own house*) Come inside, then.

JACK. No, better idea! (*Whispers to* SIR PETER, *indicating the* EYESORE)

MADAME. (*To* NANETTE) *Vite, allez voir si son chapeau est dans sa chambre.*

(NANETTE *disappears.* MADAME *stands waiting, looking up at the house.*)

SIR PETER. (*With horror; to* JACK) I wash my hands of it!

(*He dashes into his house.* JACK *goes to the* EYESORE *and speaks to him. The* EYESORE *drops his tackle with alacrity, and both vanish round the corner.*)

NANETTE. (*Reappearing above, with a hat*) *Oui, Madame, voilà le chapeau de Mademoiselle. Mademoiselle doit être au pavillon.*

MADAME. *Non; je viens de l'apeller.* (*With sudden suspicion*) *Serait-il possible——?*

(*She comes down quickly to the summer-house.* NANETTE *closes the window and disappears.*)

MADAME. (*Discovers* LORD OTFORD. *Starts slightly; but is quite self-possessed*) Oh!

OTFORD. (*Condescendingly*) I am the tres-

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passer. (*Rises.* MADAME *moves to go*) May I detain you one moment?

MADAME. (*Very stiffly*) I am at a loss——

OTFORD. I heard you calling your daughter. I presume you are Madame—(*He consults the letter*)—ah—Lachesnais. (MADAME *slightly inclines her head, but makes no reply*) I am Lord Otford —(*He expects this to have an effect, but* MADAME *only brushes it aside with a movement of her hand, as a matter of no importance. This nonplusses him slightly. Pointing to the seat under the elm*) Ah —pray be seated.

MADAME. (*Declining to sit*) What you have to say can be of so little importance——

OTFORD. (*Flushing*) I beg your pardon! What I have to say is of the utmost consequence!

MADAME. I shall be surprised. And I am waiting.

OTFORD. You make it somewhat difficult, ma'am.

MADAME. Then why give yourself the trouble? (*Moves*)

OTFORD. (*Hastily*) Pray wait!—The fact is—my foolish son——

MADAME. (*Holding up her hand*) Ah!—I can spare you any further discomfort. Your son forced his acquaintance on my child in my absence a week ago. Be assured we are willing to overlook his lack of manners. The circumstance need not be further alluded to.

OTFORD. But it must! I must explain!

MADAME. No explanation or apology is required, since under no circumstances shall we allow the acquaintance to continue.

OTFORD. But my son has pledged his word to come again, and——

MADAME. Make yourself easy on that score. He has broken his word.

OTFORD. That was my doing! I persuaded him

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to wait a week. I regret to say he means to come to-day.

MADAME. Well, Pomander Walk is public, and we cannot prevent him.

OTFORD. But he'll see you daughter!

MADAME. I think not. Unless he breaks into the house.

OTFORD. Upon my soul, I believe he'll go that length! That is where I ask for your cooperation.

MADAME. Pardon me. Not cooperation. (*Haughtily*) But I shall defend my own.

OTFORD. (*Amazed*) Defend?—What do you mean?

MADAME. (*With dignity*) I mean, that no member of your family is likely to cross my threshold.

OTFORD. (*Still more amazed*) You speak as though you nursed a grudge against my family!

MADAME. (*With a tinge of scorn*) Oh, no grudge whatever! But I remember——

OTFORD. Remember what——?

MADAME. (*Facing him*) Am I so changed—Jack Sayle——?

OTFORD. Indeed, ma'am—(*Starting*) Good God!

MADAME. Are you still puzzled?

OTFORD. Lucy!

MADAME. Lucy Pryor. (*She bows and moves* L. *as if to go in*)

OTFORD. (*Deeply moved*) No!—No!—Stop! This alters the case entirely!

MADAME. (*With raised eyebrows*) How?

OTFORD. (*At a loss*) I—I don't know—I am stunned!—After all these years!

MADAME. (*Lightly*) Why, what does it amount to? After all these years, Lord Otford meets Madame Lachesnais. These are not the Jack Sayle and Lucy Pryor who loved years ago. He does not meet a broken-hearted woman, pining for her lost

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girlhood, but one who has been a happy wife, and a happy mother—and a mother who will defend her daughter's happiness. (*With sligh mockery*) So there is no cause for such a tragic countenance, my lord!

OTFORD. (*Nonplussed, angry with himself*) Madam *—I am well rebuked. I wish you a very good day! (*With a profound bow he goes up.* JACK *returns in the* EYESORE'S *coat and hat with the collar up, and the hat crushed down.* LORD OTFORD *nearly runs up against him. To* JACK *relieving his feelings*) Damn you, sir! (*Exit*)

(*The* EYESORE (JACK) *calmly picks up his rod. He finds a fish on the hook.* MADAME *leans a moment against one of the pillars of the summer-house.* MRS. POSKETT *opens her upper window.* SIR PETER *appears at his.* MARJOLAINE *and* BARBARA *come out of No.* 4.)

MRS. POSKETT. (*Calling*) Sempronius!—Puss! Puss! Puss!

(THE EYESORE *unhooks the fish, and throws it on the grass beside him.* MADAME *crosses slowly in front of tree to* L.)

SIR PETER. It's no use calling him, ma'am; he's got his eye on the fish.

MRS. POSKETT. (*Indicating the* EYESORE) You don't say the Eyesore's caught one!

SIR PETER. (*Chuckling*) Ay, ay! He's wonderfully patient and persistent, ma'am!

MRS. POSKETT. Astonishing what patience and persistence'll do, Admiral. (*Closes her window*)

SIR PETER. What's she mean? (*He leans out and whistles towards the* EYESORE, *but sees*

* Not "Madame."

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MADAME *coming*) Gobblessmysoul! Here's Madame! (*Closes window and disappears hurriedly*)

(*Meanwhile* MARJOLAINE *and* BARBARA *have come out of No* 4.)

MADAME. I was a little alarmed about you, Marjolaine. Did you not hear me call?

MARJOLAINE. No, *Maman chèrie.*

MADAME. (*To* BARBARA) Don't let her stay out if it rains. (*She goes into No.* 5)

BARBARA. The Eyesore looks more revolting than ever. (*Goes* R. *of tree*)

(*At this moment the* EYESORE *catches another fish, which he lays with the first.*)

MARJOLAINE. (*With a little shudder*) Dreadful!—Oh! he's caught a fish!

BARBARA. Wonderful! (*Whispered*) What is he doing, now?

MARJOLAINE. Don't look! (*In a tragic whisper*) He's putting on a *worm!* (*They come down*) It was impossible to talk in Ruth's presence, with Doctor Johnson screaming in the next room.

(JIM, JANE *and* NANETTE *are seen through the upper windows moving about the rooms.* MADAME *is seen at lower window.* BARBARA *and* MARJOLAINE *walk to* R. *and back to* R. C. *with their arms round each other's waists.*)

BARBARA. (*Rapidly*) Dearest, shall I confess that sometimes that bird—But no! It were disloyal!—Only, if Charles had given me a lock of his hair, perhaps it would not have made so much

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noise. Yet that is a selfish wish, for he had been scalped.

MARJOLAINE. How dreadful!—Barbara, were you very much in love?

BARBARA. Dearest, is that quite a delicate question?

MARJOLAINE. Well—I mean, are you still as much in love as ever?

BARBARA. *Dearest!*—do you think love can change? And do I not hear the sound of my darling's voice every time Doctor Johnson yells? Oh! if only that innocent fowl had been present when Charles used different language!

MARJOLAINE. (*Innocently*) But—did he?

BARBARA. (*Pensively*) I sometimes wonder.

MARJOLAINE. Perhaps the loss of his hair——

BARBARA. Yes, but he concealed the honourable scar under a lovely wig. And (*Looking at the house*) O, dearest!—Can any physical infirmity affect true love?

MARJOLAINE. (*Watching her closely*) I—suppose—not.

BARBARA. (*Enthusiastically*) I am quite *sure* it cannot.

MARJOLAINE. (*Taking both her hands. Searchingly*) Barbara—why are you quite sure?

BARBARA. (*Confused*) Dearest!—How searching you are!

MARJOLAINE. (*More pressing*) Tell me! Why are you quite sure?

BARBARA. (*Evading the question*) Did your mother match those lovely silks?

MARJOLAINE. (*Meaningly*) Mr. Basil plays the violen beautifully.

BARBARA. (*In a flutter*) Oh, dearest! Oh, you wicked dearest! You have guessed my secret. (*Kisses* MARJOLAINE)

MARJOLAINE. I was sure before I guessed!

BARBARA. Promise you will never tell a living

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soul!—Look! The Eyesore has caught another fish! Poor darling!

MARJOLAINE. (*Severely*) You are *not* in love with the Eyesore as well?

BARBARA. I mean the fish! To be drawn out of the watery element!

MARJOLAINE. That comes of liking worms.

BARBARA. (*Very sentimentally*) That's what I shall do. (*Sits* R. C.) I shall let the worm i' the bud feed on my damaged cheek——

(MARJOLAINE *sits* L. C. JACK EYESORE *moves down a little.*)

MARJOLAINE. Barbara, suppose Mr. Basil's cheek is being fed on, too!

BARBARA. Dearest, that is impossible.

MARJOLAINE. Suppose I *know* it is?

BARBARA. You wonderful child!—(*Sharply*) Then why doesn't he say so?

MARJOLAINE. Suppose he's too shy?

BARBARA. Oh, aren't men silly?—(*Tragically*) Then we must look and long.

MARJOLAINE. But suppose a third person spoke!

(JACK EYESORE *moves down a little further.*)

BARBARA. *You!*

MARJOLAINE. No. (*Sees the* EYESORE *still approaching*) Hush!—the Eyesore—(*Rises and brings* BARBARA *down* L.)

BARBARA. You don't mean *he's* to be Cupid's messenger——!

MARJOLAINE. (*Laughing*) No, no!—Listen!—and try not to scream!—Doctor Johnson talks, doesn't he?

BARBARA. (*Bewildered*) Doctor John——?

MARJOLAINE. And he learns easily?

BARBARA. Learns *what——?*

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MARJOLAINE. Let Basil hear it from him.

BARBARA. Hear *what?*

MARJOLAINE. (*Laughing*) Oh, you little goose! Teach the parrot to say "Barbara loves you!"

BARBARA. (*With a scream*) Marjory!

MARJOLAINE. (*Silencing her*) Sh!

BARBARA. (*Suddenly grave*) Charles's only gift—turned to such uses!—(*Shocked*) O Marjory! (*Moves away* R.)

MARJOLAINE. Wouldn't Charles be pleased to know his gift had been the means of making you happy?

BARBARA. From what I can remember of him, I should say, decidedly not!

(JACK EYESORE *moves still further down.*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Alluding to the* EYESORE) The Eyesore's quite close!

BARBARA. Oh! (*Very excited*) I can't bother about him. Oh, it's such a splendid idea! Oh, my goodness, what shall I do! (*Runs* L.)

MARJOLAINE. (*Alluding to the* EYESORE) I'll speak to him!—I'll save him from Sir Peter's wrath!

BARBARA. No! No!

MARJOLAINE. Stand by me! Hold my hand!

(BARBARA *runs to* MARJOLAINE *again and then back to house.*)

BARBARA. I daren't—I'm frightened!—And I want to begin teaching the bird! (*She runs into No.* 4)

MARJOLAINE. Treacherous Barbara! (*She summons up all her courage, and approaches the* EYESORE. *At last she speaks, very timidly*) S—Sir——! (*The* EYESORE *throws his wrap-rascal and hat into the gazebo, and stands revealed as* JACK. *With an involuntary cry of joy*) Jack!

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JACK. Quick! Into the arbour!

MARJOLAINE. (*Remembering her indignation*) I will *not!*

JACK. (*Seizing her, and dragging her off*) Yes, you will! (*He has dragged her into the summer-house. Sits left of her and at once says*) Marjory, I love you!

MARJOLAINE. (*Sinking on his breast, overwhelmed*) Oh! Oh!

JACK. (*Folding her close to him, and speaking passionately*) I love you, love you, little Marjory. I loved you the first moment I saw you under the elm.

MARJOLAINE. (*Breaking away from him*) How dare you! Oh, how dare you! I didn't know what I was doing! You swept me off my feet! Go away! You broke your word! You never came!

JACK. I come *now!*

MARJOLAINE. In a horrible disguise! And too late! (*Sobbing*) I have promised not to love you!

JACK. Whom have you promised?

MARJOLAINE. My dear, dear Mother!

JACK. *Don't* you love me?

MARJOLAINE. If I did, I've promised not to.

JACK. What's the use of that, if you do?

MARJOLAINE. *I* keep my word.

JACK. So do I.

MARJOLAINE. Oh!

JACK. Differently. I told my father; and I promised I'd stay away a week and make sure. I've made sure, and I've come. Isn't that keeping my word?

MARJOLAINE. (*Hesitating*) It seems so, when you tell it—but——

JACK. Do they want you to marry somebody else?

MARJOLAINE. No.

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JACK. They want *me* to. (*With conscious virtue*) But I refused.

MARJOLAINE. That's it! You're a great man; by-and-by you'll live in marble halls; and you never said a word about it!

JACK. Hang it all! I told you my name! I can't go about shouting I'm a lord's son!

MARJOLAINE. And you're going to marry a great lady! (*Sobbing*) The Hon—honourable Caroline Thring!—Oh, doesn't it sound horrid!

JACK. (*Violently*) I'm not going to marry her! —And she doesn't want to marry me; and there's only one girl in the world for me, and that's you—you—you.

(*Shower of rain threatened. Lights begin to go down very gradually.*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Holding him off, and speaking very earnestly*) Jack—I'm the one girl in the world you can never marry.

JACK. (*Awed*) You speak as if you meant it!——

MARJOLAINE. (*Rising*) I do. We are fated to part.

JACK. Why on earth——?

MARJOLAINE. It is a terrible secret. (*Sits*) Sit close. Oh, closer! Listen. (*Melodramatically*) Your father loved my mother, when they were both very young——

JACK. No——!

MARJOLAINE. 'M. And he went on loving her for years and years and years; and then he left her, just as you left me last Saturday; and went and married the Honourable Caroline Thring!

JACK. (*Bewildered*) What?

MARJOLAINE. Oh, well—same thing—some other great lady.

JACK. (*Gives a low whistle*) Phew!

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MARJOLAINE. And *Maman's* never forgotten it. Just as I shouldn't. And that's why she fainted when she heard your name.

JACK. (*Whistles again*) Phew!—That accounts for my father's temper just now!

MARJOLAINE. (*Puzzled*) Just now——?

JACK. When I landed he was here with your mother.

MARJOLAINE. (*Astonished and frightened*) Oh!

JACK. Sir Peter told me. It was a close shave. I had just time to borrow that fellow's coat. When my father came out he was perfectly furious. He swore at me horribly.

MARJOLAINE. You see! *Maman* had just told him what she thinks about him, and we must part for ever. (*Tragically*) It's what they call a Blood-Feud. (*Rises and crosses to* L. *of* JACK)

JACK. (*Rising*) Then we must marry, to wipe it out! Marjory, we must fly!

MARJOLAINE. Fly——?

JACK. Fly!—Run away!—Elope!

MARJOLAINE. Leave *Maman*—! (*Matter of fact*) I couldn't do it!

JACK. You'd have to, if we were married.

MARJOLAINE. Afterwards, perhaps—but not before.

JACK. We'll be married at once. Then it'll *be* afterwards.

MARJOLAINE. No, no, no. It's no use. (*Appealingly, but meaning the opposite*) Don't ask me, will you? Besides, we can't be married at once. In your stupid England, the parson has to ask the congregation three times whether they have any objection! As if it was their business!

JACK. Banns!—Hang! (*Thinks*) I know! Licence!

MARJOLAINE. Don't ask me. You won't ask me, will you?—(*Eagerly*) What is a licence?

JACK. You go to a Bishop, and he gives you a

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document, and then you go to the nearest Church—and there you are!

MARJOLAINE. I don't believe you're there at all. Oh, it's no use! (*Pause, then very tenderly*) Do you know any Bishops?

JACK. (*Crestfallen*) No. Don't you?

MARJOLAINE. (*Miserably*) Not one.

JACK. It's discouraging.

(*Both sit.* DOCTOR STERNROYD *comes out of his house, laden with books. He puts his hand out; finds it is raining; opens his umbrella; and with difficulty gets through the gate.*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Hearing him*) Sh!

JACK. Why?

MARJOLAINE. The Reverend Doctor Sternroyd—coming out of his house.

JACK. A parson?

MARJOLAINE. Yes.

JACK. (*Jumping up*) By George!

MARJOLAINE. What are you going to do?

(JACK *comes to the edge of the summer-house, and calls.*)

JACK. Doctor Sternroyd!

MARJOLAINE. (*Alarmed*) Oh!

STERNROYD. (*Startled; lets all his books fall*) Dear me!—Tut, tut! (*He gets hopelessly mixed up with his umbrella and his books*)

JACK. (*Helping him*) I beg your pardon, Doctor. (*Edges him into the summer-house*) Come in, it's going to rain. (JACK *leads* DR. STERNROYD *to seat in gazebo: they put books on the ground in front of* C. *of seat*)

(*Enter the* EYESORE; *looks for his coat and hat,*

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then expresses joy at the fish, and resumes fishing.)

MRS. POSKETT. (*Opening her window*) Sempronius! Sempronius! Come in, you bad cat! You'll get wet through! (*She disappears*)

(MARJOLAINE *takes* DR. STERNROYD'S *umbrella and shuts it.*)

JACK. Sit down, Doctor; here, between us.

STERNROYD. (*Bewildered*) But, my dear young friends—! (*Takes umbrella from* MARJOLAINE)

JACK. You'd get wet and catch cold. (*He takes umbrella*) My name's Jack Sayle.

(DR. STERNROYD *takes umbrella from* JACK.)

MARJOLAINE. His name is the Honourable John Sayle, and he is the only son of Lord Otford.

STERNROYD. (*Promptly and glibly*) Otford: Or, on a fess azure between in chief, a sinister arm embowed and couped at the shoulder fesswise vested of the second, holding in the hand proper a martel gules, and in base a cerf regardant passant vert, three martlets of the first. Crest: out of a crest coronet a blasted oak——

MARJOLAINE. Oh!

STERNROYD. Motto: Sayle and Return.

JACK. (*Who has been impatiently trying to interrupt him*) Doctor—! (*The two lean across the utterly bewildered* DOCTOR *and talk volubly without giving him a chance of getting a word in. Their speeches overlap*) When you've quite done, we want to get married, and you've got to get a licence—

(*Shower over. Lights begin to go gradually up again.*)

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MARJOLAINE. Because we're in a dreadful hurry and *Maman* won't hear of it. (*Down on one knee*)

JACK. And my father wants me to marry Caroline Thring—which is wicked——

MARJOLAINE. And of course I'll never do it, and it's no use asking me, and——

JACK. We're going to be married anyhow, and if you don't help, we shall run away——

MARJOLAINE. And you wouldn't like to be the cause of our doing that, would you—(*She kneels*)

JACK. And we love each other—(*He kneels*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Leaning forward*) Very, very, dearly!

(*Their lips meet, across* DR. STERNROYD'S *knees to the horror of the almost stupefid antiquary.*)

STERNROYD. (*Trying to rise*) I am deeply shocked! (*Rising between them*) Profoundly surprised! I shall make a point of informing Madame Lachesnais and his lordship——

(MARJOLAINE *and* JACK *rise.*)

JACK. Oh, I say! You can't, you know, because we took you into our confidence!

STERNROYD. (*As nearly angry as he can be*) I did not ask for your confidence!

JACK. Well—you've got it!

MARJOLAINE. (*Insinuatingly*) And—Doctor dear—think of when you were young!

STERNROYD. (*Arrested*) Eh?—Dear me!—How did you know?—(*Sits*) If I did run away with my blessed Araminta——

JACK. Ah!—there you see!

STERNROYD. I had every excuse. She was deeply interested in prehistoric remains.

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MARJOLAINE. (*To* STERNROYD) And I'm sure you were very happy.

STERNROYD. (*Sadly*) Ah, my child, she has been dead thirty years! (*Snuffs*)

MARJOLAINE. Dear Doctor Sternroyd!

STERNROYD. But this is so hare-brained! A special licence is not so easily had. His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury——

MARJOLAINE. (*Impressed*) O my goodness! An *Arch*bishop!

STERNROYD. Requires excellent reasons——

JACK. I've told you! We love each other!

STERNROYD. I fear that would not satisfy his Grace.

MARJOLAINE. Wicked old gentleman!

JACK. We'll find reasons!—Here you are! My leave's up in a month: only just time for the honeymoon.

STERNROYD. H'm. (*Rises, goes a little* L. *then turns to them*) I have an idea. The Archbishop is forming a collection of antiquities. I found a rare Elizabethan tobacco pipe here the other day. Perhaps if I were to offer that to his Grace, it might oil the wheels.—Yes.—It will be a wrench, but I'll take it to-morrow. Ah, no! To-morrow's Sunday!

JACK. Dash it!—What a way Sunday has of coming in the wrong part of the week!

STERNROYD. Hush! Monday, then.

JACK. And we can be married the same day?

STERNROYD. No, no! The day after, perhaps.

MARJOLAINE. (*Ticking the days off on her fingers*) Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday—oh, *dear!*

JACK. But what am I to do till then? I daren't go home. My father's quite capable of having me kidnapped and sent to my ship!

MARJOLAINE. (*Distressed*) O Jack!

JACK. (*With decision*) Doctor—you must put me up. (*Rises*)

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STERNROYD. Put you——?

JACK. Up. Give me a bed.

STERNROYD. And incur your noble father's displeasure?

JACK. On the contrary. He'd be deeply grateful to you for showing me hospitality.

(*Lights full.*)

STERNROYD. But—Mr. Brooke-Hoskyn——!

JACK. He shan't see me—and if he does, his mouth's shut. *Shut!*

STERNROYD. You'll find me poor company, young gentleman.

JACK. It's only for two days. And every evening (*To* MARJOLAINE) we'll meet under the elm. (DR. STERNROYD *picks up one of the books*) I'll whistle—so (*Does it*) and you'll come out.

STERNROYD. Ah, well! (*Sits between them*) Now you must give me full particulars. Your names; ages; professions, if any——

MARJOLAINE. How horrid!

STERNROYD. (*Opening one of his books, reads the title with great enjoyment*) "*Epicteti quae supersunt Dissertationes*". A pencil. Now, Mr. Sayle——

(*The three put their heads together. The* DOCTOR *questions them and writes their answers on the fly-leaf. The* EYESORE *in his corner has been showing symptoms of increasing anxiety and discomfort about Sempronius. He has "shoo'd" him and shaken his fist at him to no purpose.* BROOKE-HOSKYN *comes out of No.* 3 *in gorgeous array. As he comes down the steps, he is arrested, presumably by a voice from the room above. He stops, with an impatient exclamation, turns, and addresses the upstair window somewhat peevishly.*)

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BROOKE. Eh? What?—Late?—Yes; I told you I should be. But I have the key. What? Yes; I did; I found the key-hole easily enough, but the key was twisted—What? Sober—? (*Indignant*) Reely, Selina——! (*Meanwhile* RUTH PENNYMINT *comes out of No.* 4. MRS. POSKETT *is at her open window.* SIR PETER *comes to his door.* BASIL *opens his window, and plays the fiddle.* MADAME *comes into her garden.* BARBARA *is at the ground floor window of No* 4. JIM *comes out of No.* 1 *and trains the sweet peas. The* EYESORE *grows more and more violent towards the cat. Continuing without interruption*) Dammit, ma'am, they'll hear you howling all down the Walk.

RUTH. Off to the whirl of fashion so early?

BROOKE. (*Nervously edging away from the house*) H'm—it is a long way to the City—My friends the Goldsmiths' Company—a banquet to the Chinese Ambassador—my shay is waiting round the corner.

RUTH. I'll go and sit with your poor wife.

BROOKE. How kind of you. But—ah—not just now. I left the dear soul asleep and dreaming of the angels.

RUTH. Oh! Look at the Eyesore!

BROOKE. Haha!—Sempronius is about to snatch his fish, and he cannot leave his line! Reely most amusing!

STERNROYD. (*In the summer-house, closing his book*) There! I think that's all.

MARJOLAINE. (*Peeping out to the right of the summer-house*) Oh! Oh!

(*For at this moment, the* EYESORE, *losing patience, flings down his rod, leaps at the cat, seizes it, and hurls it, yelling horribly, into the river. Then, picking up the fish and his tackle, he bolts.*)

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MRS. POSKETT. Sempronius!—Save him!
RUTH. (*To* BROOKE) Save him!
BROOKE. In these clothes!
MADAME. (*Calls*) Marjolaine!
MARJOLAINE. (*Running out of the summer-house*) *Voilà, Maman!*

(*But in the nick of time* SIR PETER, *flinging off his coat, hurries down the water-steps.*)

BARBARA. Oh, Sir Peter! Take care!
BASIL. He will be drowned!

(SIR PETER *emerges, holding the drenched and struggling cat by the scruff of his neck. He brings it with heroic dignity to* MRS. POSKETT, *who is leaning half fainting against her railings.*)

SIR PETER. Your cat, ma'am!

(MRS. POSKETT *takes the cat, and, to the amazement of the Walk, throws it over the railings of her garden; then, to the Walk's further stupefaction, she flings her arms round* SIR PETER'S *neck, and cries:*)

MRS. POSKETT. My hero! My preserver! (*She clings to him*)

SIR PETER. Gobblessmysoul!
MADAME. Marjolaine!
RUTH. (*Simultaneously*) How beautiful!
BROOKE. She's got him!
BARBARA. Happy pair!
BASIL. (*Plays "See, the Conquering Hero Comes."*)
JIM. Bclay there!

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(*Enter* CAROLINE THRING.)

JIM. 'Ware pirate—Here's the Dragon!

(*All the women rush to the doors and windows of their houses and watch.*)

CAROLINE. What horrible people. (*To* SIR PETER) You dreadful old man! (*Coming* R. C.)

SIR PETER. Eh! You, again!—Don't speak to me!—I'm dangerous!

CAROLINE. You don't know whom you are addressing!

SIR PETER. I don't; and I don't want to!

CAROLINE. I am Caroline Thring!

SIR PETER. Caroline! Gobblessmysoul! (*Collapses*)

JACK. (*In the summer house*) Caroline! Oh! my stars! (*Puts on the* EYESORE'S *coat and hat*)

MARJOLAINE. Caroline! (*Helps* JACK)

CAROLINE. (*Walking round to* L. C. *looking at houses*) Where is the girl with the curls?

SIR PETER. —I—I don't know!

CAROLINE. In the summer house, no doubt.

JACK. She's coming. Doctor, lie—lie till you're black in the face!

SIR PETER. (C. *stopping* CAROLINE) You mustn't go there! You *can't* go there! You *shan't* go there!

CAROLINE. Stand aside—intoxicated person.

SIR PETER. Intoxicated! Me!! (*Goes up a little*)

CAROLINE. (*Seeing* DR. STERNROYD) A clergyman!

STERNROYD. Humble servant, m'am.

CAROLINE. (*Indicating* JACK) But this——?

MARJOLAINE. A poor man, your ladyship: I'm teaching him his letters, your ladyship: and this kind

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clergyman is going to give him soup, your ladyship. Come, good man, lean on me.

CAROLINE. I'm glad my first visit bore such good fruit. (*To* JACK) Give me your other arm.

BASIL. (*Who is watching from upstairs window, shouts*) But the Eyesore ran away! Who's——?

SIR PETER. Hold your tongue.

(CAROLINE, MARJOLAINE *and* JACK *cross to* L. *and* JACK *goes into house.*)

BASIL. (*Shouting louder*) Well, but, Dr. Sternroyd——!

STERNROYD. Hold your silly tongue, sir.

CAROLINE. (*To* MARJOLAINE) You're a good little girl—here's a four-penny bit for you.

MARJOLAINE. (*Demurely*) Thank you my lady.

(CAROLINE THRING *is down* L. *she walks rapidly round past each house; as she does so each door is vigourously slammed as she passes it. Exit* R. U. E.)

CURTAIN.

(*When the curtain is taken up all except* MARJOLAINE *and* SIR PETER *who are at seat* C., *are at their doors and windows.* JACK *has taken off the* EYESORE'S *hat and thrown back the coat, and is at the lower window of* STERNROYD'S *house laughing. All burst into shouts of laughter.*)

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ACT III.

PROPERTIES FOR ACT III.

Tea things on table and chair (both from No. 5) (between tree and No. 5)
Stone by Gazebo for Eyesore
Ladder and Torch (off stage)
Pie and bread " "
Parcels " "

LIGHTING ACT III.

Red and white foots and borders full up.

R. 2 Rose spots (later on replaced by blue—when moon rises) Arm at back of panorama R. pinks up—blues not up yet.

L. (Blue spot to come on later when moon rises) In top room of No. 5. Baby lense (amber) to come on when 2nd lamp post is lighted by lamp lighter.

CUES.

Page 107. And I shall call the book "Pearls before Swine" (begin very gradually to take white out of borders)

Page 111. Now I want you to knock at that door (Begin to put blues into borders, and very gradually take off 1 rose spot off R. bridge) Lower whites off foots a little and put blues in gradually.

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Page 116. That will tell the Walk. (take 2nd rose spot off very slowly—put blues into arm behind panorama and let rose lights gradually die out).

Page 118. Hoskyn by all that's wonderful. (All reds are out—only white and blue in foots).

Page 122. As lamplighter lights the 2nd lamp The baby lense is lighted top window of No. 5 focussed on Madame and Lord Otford by the tree.

Page 129. Let me pass—let me pass. Five years I've been a sailor. (The moon rises slowly over top of church and ripple gradually comes on the water. As moon appears the blue spots are slowly unblinded R. and L. and flood the stage). As lamplighter puts out 2nd lamp Baby lense in No. 5 is blinded.

On no account must foots be raised or lighting of stage be altered for calls at end of play.

(Author's directions.)

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ACT III.

(Monday evening, June 3rd, 1805.)

Scene:—*All the inhabitants of Pomander Walk, excepting* Barbara Pennymint *and the* Rev. Jacob Sternroyd, *are assembled round the elm, where* Madame *is* L. C. *presiding at the after-dinner tea-table.* Nanette *goes to and fro with a large kettle of boiling water from which she replenishes the tea-pot.* Jim *tries to help her, but gets his fingers slapped for his pains. It is very near sunset, and a perfectly ideal June evening. The level sun, shining through the leaves of the elm, turns them to gold, and sets some of the windows of the Walk aflame. Yet there is an air of subdued gloom over most of our friends.* Mrs. Poskett *sits under the tree, and drinks her tea with the resignation of a martyr.* Basil, *is lost in sentimental musings, and his eyes wander to No. 4 from which he hopes* Barbara *will soon issue.* Ruth *is in a bad temper.* Madame *is puzzled by* Marjolaine, *who is the only person in genuinely high spirits.* Sir Peter *makes a heroic pretence to seem at his ease but casts anxious looks at* Mrs. Poskett. Brooke-Hoskyn *eyes* Sir Peter *with a disappearing and glassy stare, but is affable to the rest of the party. From time to time* Jack Sayle *is seen peering hungrily from behind the curtain of the down-stair window of No. 3 or moving about like a caged tiger. One great feature of the Walk is missing: the* Eyesore *is not at his post.*

Brooke. (R. *Booming*) Ah, ladies. there is

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nothing like a dish of tea after dinner. It is so soothing!

MRS. POSKETT. (*Tearfully*) Nothing can soothe the broken heart. (*On* R. C. *of seat under tree*)

(RUTH L. *of seat.* MARJOLAINE *up* R. *with* BASIL. SIR PETER *down* L. JIM R. *of tea-table.* MARJOLAINE *takes cup from* BASIL, *and takes it to the tea-table.*)

SIR PETER. (*Asserting himself; with forced cheerfulness*) Hah!—I've always said Pomander Walk was a Haven of Content. Look at it!—(*No one pays the slightest attention*) I say, look at it!

(BROOKE *glares.* MRS. POSKETT *and* RUTH *turn their backs on him.* BASIL *sighs.*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Running to* SIR PETER, *coming to the rescue*) There's something the matter with the Walk to-night, Sir Peter; I'm the only merry one among you!

MADAME. (*To* MARJOLAINE, *with quiet remonstrance*) Marjolaine——!

(SIR PETER *wanders up and round to* R.)

MARJOLAINE. Oh, let me laugh, *Maman!* (*Whispers*) They are so droll! Sir Peter is afraid of Mrs. Poskett; Mrs. Poskett is almost in tears; Mr. Basil is gloomy; Ruth is in a bad temper; and Mr. Brooke-Hoskyn hasn't got over Saturday's banquet!

MADAME. (*With grave reproof*) But you, Marjolaine——

MARJOLAINE. (*Laughing*) You told me to fight it, *Maman!*

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(MADAME *shakes her head, and sits at the tea-table.*)

SIR PETER. (R. *of* BROOKE-HOSKYN. *Heartily*) Didn't see you in Church yesterday, Brooke. Too much turtle on Saturday—what——

BROOKE. Nothing of the sort, sir!—I was holding my dear Selina's hand! (*He turns on his heel*)

SIR PETER. Um.

MRS. POSKETT. How is that dear, innocent lamb?

BROOKE. Gambolling, ma'am. Figuratively speaking, Selina is gamboling.

MRS. POSKETT. How wonderful!

BASIL. (*Down* L.) Miss Marjory, won't you cheer us with a song?

MADAME. (*Hastily*) I am sure she would prefer not to sing to-night.

MARJOLAINE. Oh, yes, *Maman,* with pleasure, if they would like it!

MADAME. Brave child.

SIR PETER. (R.) Sing that pretty little thing—(*Roars*) "Oh, dear, what can the matter be."

BROOKE. (*With a snort*) Ha!

SIR PETER. (*Turning on him furiously*) Well, sir?

BROOKE. (*With arched eye-brows*) What, sir? (*Goes up*)

MADAME. (*Amiably*) Sir Peter—Mrs. Poskett's cup is empty.

(BROOKE-HOSKYN *goes into gazebo and sits.*)

SIR PETER. Is it?—O hang! (*To* MRS. POSKETT, *gruffly*) Your cup, ma'am!

MRS. POSKETT. (*Looking up at him tenderly*) How *kind* you are!

(SIR PETER *takes cup to tea-table.*)

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BASIL. (*To quiet them for* MARJOLAINE'S *song*) Hush, hush!

(JIM *listens to song from window of No.* 1.)

MARJOLAINE. (*Sings*)

Oh, dear, what can the matter be?
Dear, dear, what can the matter be?
Oh, dear, what can the matter be?
Johnnie's sc l ng at the fair!
He promised he'd buy me a fairing would please me,
And then for a kiss, oh, he said he would tease me;
He promised to buy me a bunch of blue ribbon,
To set off my bonnie brown hair.

BROOKE. (*In his grandest manner, applauding with the tips of his fingers*) Brava! Brava!

(MRS. POSKETT *beckons to* MARJOLAINE *who runs to* R. *of her.*)

SIR PETER. Brava be hanged! Capital! (*To* RUTH) Where's little Miss Barbara?
RUTH. (*Fiercely*) Sh!
SIR PETER. Well, I'm——!
MARJOLAINE. (*Sings*)

He promised to buy me a basket of posies,
A garland of lilies, a garland of roses,
A little straw hat to set off the blue ribbon
To tie up my bonnie brown hair
For it's——

(*Chorus* OMNES.)

Oh, dear, what can the matter be, *etc.*

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(*Half way through the 2nd verse* SIR PETER *joins in*—JIM *at lower window also joins in chorus and is stopped by* SIR PETER. *General applause. "Thank you"! "Very sweet"! etc.* NANETTE *comes up to* MARJOLAINE.)

NANETTE. *Mon Dieu, que c'est joli!*

SIR PETER. (*Roaring*) "Oh, dear, what can the matterbe."

MRS. POSKETT. (*Breaking down*) O don't!—I can't bear it.

RUTH. (*To* SIR PETER) Brute!

BROOKE. Mong doo, mong doo! Silence for the Admiral's song.

SIR PETER. By Jehoshaphat!

MADAME. Sir Peter—(*Indicating* MRS. POSKETT) Take her another dish of tea.

SIR PETER. Me, ma'am!—(*But he takes it 'round in front*) It's a confounded conspiracy! (*To* MRS. POSKETT) Your tea, ma'am.

MRS. POSKETT. (*Sobbing*) How sweet of you!

SIR PETER. Dash it and hang it, ma'am, you're crying into it! (SIR PETER *and* BROOKE-HOSKYN *glare at each other.* SIR PETER *goes up*)

MARJOLAINE. (*To* RUTH) Where is Barbara? (*Cross to* RUTH *and down* R.)

RUTH. (*Rising, taking her apart*) It's enough to make a saint swear! She's been locked in with Doctor Johnson since Saturday. Only comes out for meals.

(BROOKE-HOSKYN *goes to* R. *of* MADAME *at tea-table.*)

SIR PETER. (*To* BASIL) Pringle, can you tell me what's come over the Walk?

(JIM *comes out of No.* 1.)

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BASIL. (*Cold and stiff*) The Walk has lofty ideals, sir; perhaps you have fallen short of them! (*He turns away*)

SIR PETER. (*Speechless*) By Jehoshaphat! (*Up* L.)

BROOKE. (*Booming*) Yes, ma'am; Sherry was in fine condition on Saturday.

SIR PETER. (*Trying again*) And port, too, eh, Brookie, my boy?

BROOKE. (*Sternly*) My name is Brooke-Hoskyn, sir, and I was referring to my Right Honourable friend, Richard Brinsley Sheridan!

SIR PETER. (*Grumbles*) Why couldn't you say so!

BROOKE. (*To the assembly*) As I was about to say, (*With glare at* SIR PETER) when I was interrupted—What wit! What brilliance!

RUTH. Oh, do tell us!

BROOKE. In order to appreciate the point, you must remember the weather was sultry on Saturday——

SIR PETER. Gave you a headache, what?

BROOKE. (*Glares, but proceeds*) "Brooke," says he, "Brooke, my boy" (*Pats* MRS. POSKETT *heavily on the shoulder, she breaks down, and sobs*) just like that—"it's a very warm night!" (*He looks round for applause, and ultimately gets it*)

SIR PETER. H'm. Don't see much in that.

BROOKE. Nobody ever suspected you of a sense of humour, sir! (*To the others*) Ah—and my friend, H. R. H. the P. of W.——

ALL. (*Except* SIR PETER, *with awe*) Oh—h!

SIR PETER. Who?

BROOKE. (*Crushingly*) His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, sir!

MRS. POSKETT. (*Eagerly*) What did *he* say?

BROOKE. It was not so much what he said, as his manner of saying it. Just:—"Ah, Brooke, lend me

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a guinea!" but oh, the elegance! Oh, the condescension!

SIR PETER. Well! of all the——!

MADAME. Do *you* ever make speeches, Mr. Brooke-Hoskyn?

BROOKE. (*Awkwardly*) Short ones, ma'am. Frequent, but short. I have proposed the health of many gentlemen of distinction.

RUTH. How clever you must be!

BROOKE. (*With exquisite modesty*) Oh—! (*Sits* L. *of* MRS. POSKETT)

MADAME. How strangely empty the Walk looks without our fisherman!

BASIL. (*Who has gone up* L. C.) I was wondering what I missed. Of course! The Eyesore!

RUTH. He leaves a blank.

MARJOLAINE. He was a sort of statue.

MRS. POSKETT. The Walk is not the Walk without him.

SIR PETER. Why, he tried to drown your cat, ma'am!

MADAME. Oh, Sir Peter! Have you driven him away?

ALL. For shame, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER. (L.) But, dash it and hang it! I haven't!

(*Nobody believes him. All shake their heads gloomily.* BARBARA *rushes in great excitement out of No.* 4.)

BARBARA. (*Skips across to* MARJOLAINE R.) Marjory! Marjory! (*She stops abashed on seeing the others*) Oh—I didn't know——

(RUTH *down* R.)

MADAME. A dish of tea, Miss Barbara?

BARBARA. (*Curtly*) No! (*Apologetically*)

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Oh, no, thank you!—Marjory, can I speak to you?

SIR PETER. (L. *of* BARBARA, *intervening with clumsy playfulness*) Ah, Miss Barbara, I didn't see you in Church yesterday.

BARBARA. (*Confused*) Wasn't I there? I don't remember.

SIR PETER. Come now, come now! What was the text?

BARBARA. Oh, I know! "If any of you know of any cause or just impediment——"

RUTH. (*Shocked*) Barbara!

MARJOLAINE. (*Coming to the rescue*) Come away, Babs. Don't worry her, Sir Peter.

SIR PETER. (*In despair*) Even Missie! (*Sits by* MRS. POSKETT, *gets up again immediately*)

RUTH. Try to put some sense in her, Miss Marjory.

SIR PETER. (*With a last effort*) Well, ladies! To-morrow is the fourth of June.

BROOKE. As this is the third, you might safely have left us to infer that, sir.

(*The two men face each other and speak across* MRS. POSKETT.)

SIR PETER. But it seems necessary to remind the bosom friend of H. R. H. the P. of W. that it is the birthday of His Most Gracious Majesty King George the Third!—(MRS. POSKETT *holds cup near* SIR PETER *who unconsciously takes it*) Ladies, I warn you not to be alarmed when you hear me fire the salute as usual.

BROOKE. As usual!—Ha!—That brass popgun of yours——

SIR PETER. (*Furious*) Popgun——! (SIR PETER *gives cup back to* MRS. POSKETT)

BROOKE. I said popgun, sir!—has never gone off yet!

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(MRS. POSKETT *turns towards* BROOKE-HOSKYN *and unconsciously puts cup into his hand.*)

SIR PETER. Because some infernal scoundrel has always tampered with the charge! But to-night I'll load it myself! (BROOKE-HOSKYN *gives cup back to* MRS. POSKETT *who drinks the remains of her tea*) and, damme! I'll take it to bed with me! (*He stumps off in a rage into No.* 1. *On the way he runs first into* BASIL, *then into* JIM)

RUTH. (*To* MRS. POSKETT *who is finishing her tea*) We shall break him down, dear.

(NANETTE *and* JIM *clear away tea things and table, into No.* 5. MADAME *turns up stage.* MRS. POSKETT, RUTH *and* BROOKE-HOSKYN *also go up.* MARJOLAINE *and* BARABARA *down* R.)

BARBARA. (*In deep conversation with* MARJOLAINE *excitedly*) Yes!—He does surround it with flowers of speech, but he says it quite clearly.

MARJOLAINE. Dear Doctor Johnson!

BARBARA. But I cannot bear the bird's eye on me. It is like Charles's. O Marjory, he looked at me so coldly all the time I was teaching him!

MARJOLAINE. Never mind how he looked, if he'll only talk!

BARBARA. How can I ever thank you?

MARJOLAINE. (*Impulsively*). Barbara, you may be able to help me! I'll tell you a great secret—I am to be married to-morrow!

(*Exit* JIM *into No.* 1.)

BARBARA. (*Screams*) Oh! Oh!

RUTH. (*Turning*) Is anything the matter?

MARJOLAINE. No, no! (*To* BARBARA) Yes! married to-morrow! Swear you will never tell anybody, if you live to be ninety!

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BARBARA. Yes, oh, yes! I mean, no, oh, no!
MARJOLAINE. And you must be my bridesmaid.
BARBARA. *Marjory!*—Who is it?
MARJOLAINE. Sh!—(*Points to No.* 3) There!
BARBARA. (*Speechless*) Not Doctor Sternroyd!
MARJOLAINE. No, no!—There, at the window!

(JACK *is momentarily visible.*)

BARBARA. O how lovely.
MARJOLAINE. Isn't he! (*They sit* C.) We're going to be married by licence.
BARBARA. What's that?
MARJOLAINE. I don't know. Doctor Sternroyd's getting it. It lets you be married anywhere, whenever you like.
BARBARA. Heavenly!—If Doctor Johnson teaches Basil what I've taught Doctor Johnson, I'll have a licence too.

(RUTH *and* BASIL *are walking slowly from* R. *to* L. *at back.*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Calling*) Mr. Basil!
BASIL. (*Coming to them*) Yes, Miss Marjory.
MARJOLAINE. Barbara's not feeling very well—
BARBARA. (*Drooping*) No——
BASIL. Heavens! Shall I play to her?
MARJOLAINE. (*Innocently*) No; it's not so bad as that. But it's her evening hour with Doctor Johnson, and she is not quite equal to it——
RUTH. Why, bless my heart! She's been sitting with that bird all day——!
BARBARA. Unkind Ruth! The lonely bird!
MARJOLAINE. So she wondered whether you would take her place for once——
BASIL. (*Eagerly*) Why, of course! With all the pleasure in life!

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BARBARA. (*Demurely*) Oh!—but you don't know what you are letting yourself in for!

RUTH. Yes. He swears horribly. (*Joins* MADAME *and* BROOKE-HOSKYN *and* MRS. POSKETT)

BASIL. I'll be Orpheus with his lute. I'll play the Kreutzer Sonata to him. (*Going towards house*)

MARJOLAINE. (*Anxiously*) No, no!—Just let him talk! Just let him talk! (*Rises*)

(BASIL *dashes into No.* 4.)

BROOKE. (*To* RUTH, MRS. POSKETT *and* MADAME) Indeed, yes; (ADMIRAL *appears at upper window and puts groundsel in thrush's cage*) I am making a collection of my anecdotes. I shall call the book—(BROOKE *catches sight of* ADMIRAL) "Pearls before Swine"—Did I tell you my friend Sherry's bonn mott about the weather——?

ALL. (*With alacrity*) Yes! Yes!

(*They turn and go up stage.*)

BROOKE. (*Hurt*) Pardon me. (*Eagerly*) Ah! but Miss Barbara was not here! (*He buttonholes her, so to speak, takes her* L. C. *and booms*) Imagine, then, that you are standing just where you *are* standing, and I am Sheridan. You remember how we perspired on Saturday evening. (*Suiting the action to the words*) I come up to you—so. I place my hand familiarly on your shoulder—so—— (BARBARA *winces*) You understand: you are Sheridan—no: I am Sheridan, and you are me. (JANE *rushes out of No.* 3. *She ties white glove on door knocker and then comes down to* BROOKE-HOSKYN) And I—that is, Sheridan—say to you—I mean me—Brooke, my boy——

JANE. (*In a horrible whisper*) Master! Master!

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BROOKE. What is it? What the devil is it?—Go away! (*He goes to her*)

JANE. Master!—(*She whispers, pointing frantically at No.* 3)

BROOKE. (*Violently disturbed*) Eh?—What?—There, now! So like Selina! Spoilt the point of my story! (*To everybody*) Excuse me! (*He and* JANE *go into No.* 3. BARBARA *goes to* MARJOLAINE)

MADAME. I think I shall go in.—Marjolaine——?

MARJOLAINE. Oh, *Maman*—I have so much to say to Barbara!

MADAME. You are so feverish—so unlike yourself!—You are not going to be indisposed——?

MARJOLAINE. I am so well—So well!—I never *was* so well!

(MADAME *expresses uneasiness, and goes slowly into No.* 5. NANETTE, *who has already removed the tea-things, now carries in the table.*)

RUTH. (*Talking with* MRS. POSKETT, *coming* L. C.) Well—that's what *I* should do. Bring him to his knees.

MRS. POSKETT. I brought Poskett to his: why shouldn't I bring Peter?

RUTH. Strike while the iron's hot. He knows we're angry with him. Come along in. Put on your prettiest cap. I'll help you.

(*They go towards No.* 2. DOCTOR STERNROYD *comes round the corner. He is a carrying a number of grocer's parcels.*)

RUTH. Dear me, Doctor! How you are loaded!

STERNROYD. (*Confused*) Good evening, ladies! Pray excuse me if I cannot remove my hat.

MRS. POSKETT. And not books, this time?

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(MARJOLAINE *and* BARBARA *cross to* L.)

STERNROYD. No, no, no. Parcels. Just parcels. Simple necessaries, I assure you.

(RUTH *and* MRS. POSKETT *go into No.* 2. STERNROYD *shuffles towards No.* 3 *and comes face to face with* MARJOLAINE *and* BARBARA.)

BARBARA. Doctor——

STERNROYD. More women! Simple necessaries, I do assure you.

BARBARA. (*Eagerly, alluding to the parcels*) Doctor, which is the licence?

STERNROYD. (*Taken aback*) Eh—?—dear, dear, dear!—Miss Marjory, you told her?

MARJOLAINE. Of *course.*

STERNROYD. Tut, tut! Dear, dear!—What says the poet?—"Who was't betrayed the Capitol? A woman!"

JACK. (*Who has cautiously opened the window; in a hoarse whisper*) Doctor! For heaven's sake look sharp with the victuals!

STERNROYD. (*Flustered*) There! There! The cuckoo in the nest! (*He shuffles into No.* 3. *At the same moment* BASIL, *wildly excited, dashes out of No.* 4)

BASIL. (*Breathless*) Miss Barbara!

BARBARA. (*Leaning for support on* MARJOLAINE) Oh!—He's coming!

BASIL. Oh, Miss Barbara!

MARJOLAINE. Did Dr. Johnson speak? (*Crosses to* R. *of* BARBARA)

BASIL. Speak!—Ah, the gifted creature!

JACK. (*From the window, in a whisper*) Marjory!

MARJOLAINE. (*Turning to him*) Oh—take care! (*She moves towards him*)

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BARBARA. (*Innocently*) What did he say, Mr. Basil?

JACK. (*To* MARJOLAINE) Come closer.

(MARJOLAINE *goes inside the gate.*)

BASIL. (*To* BARBARA) Shall I tell you? *Dare* I tell you?

BARBARA. (*In a flutter*) You know best.

BASIL. He said—It was all in one breath—He said:—O-burn-your-lungs-and-liver-tell-Barbara you-love-her!

BARBARA. (*Rapturously*) Oh, Mr. Basil! (*She sinks into his arms*)

BASIL. (*Enthusiastically*) But it's true!—It's true!—Come! Let me tell you my own way! (*He takes her into the summer-house*)

JACK. (*To* MARJOLAINE, *who is now under the window*) It's perfectly monstrous! The old fossil's brought two eggs, a red herring, and a pot of current jelly!

(THE EYESORE *comes to his post, and begins to fish.*)

MARJOLAINE. Poor Jack!

JACK. Is that rations for a grown man? Says he'll make an omelette. Two eggs! An omelette! Ho!

BASIL. (*In the summer-house*) My own! (*He makes the word "own" sound like a lovely long-drawn organ note*)

BARBARA. My Basil! (*Rapture. Embrace*)

JACK. Can't you send. (*Pointing to the* EYESORE) that object for food?

MARJOLAINE. I daren't speak to him: he always turns out to be somebody else. Jack, if you'll be good, I'll get it myself!

JACK. Angel! Make haste! I'm starving!

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CALIFORNIA

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MARJOLAINE. If you hear me singing, look out of the window. (*She runs into No.* 5)

BASIL. And now, what's the next thing to do?

BARBARA. We must tell Ruth. (*Rises*)

BASIL. Yes! At once! (*Rises*) Oh! I'll buy Doctor Johnson a golden chain! (*Slowly crossing* L., *embracing* BARBARA *all the way*)

BARBARA. And I'll wear it for him. The dear bird!

BASIL *and* BARBARA. (*Together*) The dear, dear bird!

(MRS. POSKETT *and* RUTH *come out of No.* 2. MRS. POSKETT *is magnificent.*)

BARBARA. Dear Ruth! Come in quickly. We have *such* news for you!

RUTH. Very well. (*To* MRS. POSKETT) Courage—Lady Antrobus! (*Goes into her house*)

(RUTH, BARBARA *and* BASIL *go into No.* 4. MRS. POSKETT *reconnoitres. She sees the* EYESORE. *She goes to him.*)

MRS. POSKETT. (*Looking carefully round*) My good man—Mister—Sir—You threw Sempronius into the river on Saturday—(*Offering him a coin*) Here's a crown for you.

(THE EYESORE *bites it, spits on it, and pockets it.*)

MRS. POSKETT. I want you to knock at that door. (*She points to No.* 1. *Without moving from his place, the* EYESORE *picks up a stone and hurls it at the door.* MRS. POSKETT *utters a startled* "Oh!" THE EYESORE *goes out, leaving his tackle.* MRS. POSKETT *goes to tree.* JIM *opens the door*)

JIM. (*Looking round suspiciously*) Cuss them

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boys! (*He turns to go in again, but comes down a little when* MRS. POSKETT *speaks*)

MRS. POSKETT. (*Amiably*) Good evening, Mr. Jim!

JIM. (*Touching his forelock*) Bosun of the Admiral's gig, mum.

MRS. POSKETT. What lovely peas!

JIM. Ah. Takes a uncommon lot o' moistenin', though.

MRS. POSKETT. It is thirsty weather. (*Moving down stage* C.)

JIM. And a truer word you never spoke.

MRS. POSKETT. Mr. Bosun, I want to see the Admiral.

JIM. Ah, 'tis dirty weather wi' him, mum, sure 'nough. He've a-locked himself in by himself, and he's a-swearin' somethin' 'orrible for to 'ear.

MRS. POSKETT. Mr Bosun, would five shillings quench your thirst?

JIM. Well, mum, I can't say but 'twould take the edge off it.

MRS. POSKETT. But I must see Sir Peter.

JIM. Sheer off a cable's length, then. (*She does so* L. *He shouts*) Admiral ahoy!

SIR PETER. (*Opening his upstairs window*) D'ye want to wake the dead?

JIM. Axing your pardon, Admiral: sunset.

SIR PETER. What of it, you lubber?

JIM. Shall *I* haul the flag down, Admiral?

SIR PETER. On your life! I've hoisted it and hauled it down with my own hands, morning and night, any time these five years. D'ye think I'll let a son of a sea-cook like you, do it now? You wait till I come down. (*Disappears*)

JIM. (*To* MRS. POSKETT) Got him, mum. (*Coming down*)

MRS. POSKETT. (*Giving him money*) Here; and thank you. (*Moves* L.)

JIM. Thank *you*, mum.

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SIR PETER. (*Appears at his door. He sees* MRS. POSKETT *and stops*) Jim!

JIM. Ay, ay, sir.

SIR PETER. Haul it down yourself. (*Going*)

JIM. No, Admiral. Not after what passed your lips.

SIR PETER. Damme! I can't leave it hoisted all night!

JIM. That's as mebbe. Even the son of a sea-cook 'as 'is feelin's, same as them what's 'igher placed. (*Exit round corner*)

SIR PETER. (*Shaking his fist after him*) You mutinous scoundrel! (*He looks at* MRS. POSKETT, *then at the flag. Braces himself for the effort*) Cheer up, my hearty! (*Hums*) "Oh dear what can the matter be."

MRS. POSKETT *slowly sidles round by the railings towards* SIR PETER. *He hauls down the flag.*)

MRS. POSKETT. (*When he is mixed up in the lines*) Admiral——

SIR PETER. Ma'am.

MRS. POSKETT. Why do you force me to address you?

SIR PETER. Me!—Force you!—Gobblessmy-soul!

MRS. POSKETT. For your own good. Oh, Sir Peter, you was King of the Walk on Friday; now Mr. Brooke-Hoskyn will usurp that title. (*Sweeps down to* R. C.)

SIR PETER. (*Furiously, comes out of his garden*) Will he so, ma'am!

MRS. POSKETT. The Walk says you have lowered the prestige of His Majesty's Navy. (*Moves towards the elm*)

SIR PETER. (*Following her*) Dash it and hang it, ma'am, what do vou mean?

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MRS. POSKETT. *Well* you know what I mean. The entire Walk saw you press me to your heart.

SIR PETER. I didn't—did I——?

MRS. POSKETT. The entire Walk witnessed the outrage. And the entire Walk is indignant that nothing has come of it.

SIR PETER. Gobblessmysoul!

MRS. POSKETT. Oh, how unsailorlike! That is what the Walk says: How unsailorlike!

SIR PETER. It doesn't say that!

MRS. POSKETT. It says *that*. I am only a lone widow. If Alderman Poskett were alive, he'd see you did the right thing by his wife. But I!—I must leave my once happy home!

SIR PETER. But—dash it and hang it——!

MRS. POSKETT. Can I bear the sneers of a Pennymint? The arched eyebrows of a Brooke-Hoskyn? I must let my house. (*With a glance at him*) My *freehold* house. Let it to an undesirable tenant: a person with a mangle.

SIR PETER. (*Horrified*) Gobblessmysoul!

MRS. POSKETT. To be sure, the expense of moving is nothing when one has four hundred a year in the Funds. (*Again he is impressed*) But, oh, my lovely furniture will be chipped! And oh! how shall I part from my friends?

SIR PETER. But it's not so bad as that?

MRS. POSKETT. It's worse! And that innocent cat, Sempronius! What will *he* say? He took a chill on Saturday. The change will kill him. (*Sits* C.)

SIR PETER. (R.) Dash it and hang it, don't cry, ma'am!

MRS. POSKETT. It isn't as if I was older. I *could* be much older! But I'm young enough to have a tender heart. But never mind! I will be brave! You shall not see me weep! (*Weeps bitterly*)

SIR PETER. (*In great mental distress*) But—

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Gobblessmysoul!—What am I to do with Jim, and the flag-staff, and the thrush, and the sweet peas? What am I to do with Number One?

MRS. POSKETT. Knock a door through and make one house of them. O these paltry details! Keep everything as it is. Sweet peas! What more appropriate! Ain't I Pamela? Ain't you Peter? Don't they both begin with a sweet pea?

SIR PETER. Damme, you're right! You've swept me fore and aft! You've blown me out of the sea! By George, ma'am, I'll marry you if you'll have me!

MRS. POSKETT. (*Sinking on his breast*) *I'll* have you, Peter!—I've *got* you!

SIR PETER. I'll haul the brass gun out and fire it to-night. (*Enter* OTFORD) That'll tell the Walk!

MRS. POSKETT. *I'll* tell the Walk!

(LORD OTFORD *has turned the corner and come to the elm* L.)

OTFORD. (*Scandalised*) Peter!

SIR PETER. (*Starting*) Gobblessmysoul! Otford!

MRS. POSKETT. Present me, Peter—and tell him! (*She clings to* SIR PETER L. *of him*)

SIR PETER. (*To* OTFORD) Um—my neighbour—Mrs. Poskett——

MRS. POSKETT. Widow of Alderman Poskett.

SIR PETER. Um—Lord Otford—I am—she is—we are—No, hang it! *You* tell him!

MRS. POSKETT. (*Crossing towards* OTFORD) Happy to meet any friend of my future husband.

OTFORD. (*Courteously, but preoccupied*) Am I to understand——?

SIR PETER. (*Wiping his brow*) Yes, Jack. understand. Understand, without further palaver.

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OTFORD. My felicitations.—Madam, can you spare him a little while?

MRS. POSKETT. (*Bridling*) I'm sure no real friend of Sir Peter's would wish to tell him anything his future wife may not hear.

OTFORD. I assure you, ma'am, the matter is strictly personal to myself.

MRS. POSKETT. Naughty Lord Otford! Well, Peter, I'll wait at the gate. (*She moves up*)

SIR PETER. (*Dazed*) That's right. Wait at the gate—wait at the gate!

OTFORD. Peter—Jack's disappeared!

SIR PETER. Serves you right!

OTFORD. Hang it! (*Pointing to* MRS. POSKETT) Did I say, serves *you* right, just now? Peter: he's run away with that gel!

SIR PETER. That he hasn't. The gel's here.

OTFORD. Fact?

SIR PETER. Solemn.

OTFORD. Peter, do you know who her mother is?

SIR PETER. (*Getting angry*) You're not going to begin that again.

OTFORD. She's—Lucy Pryor!

SIR PETER. (*Puzzled*) Lucy Pryor?—(*With an exclamation*) *Not* Lucy Pryor!

OTFORD. Lucy Pryor! Ha! I was telling her how impossible the marriage was——

SIR PETER. (*Slapping his knee with delight*) And she turned out to be Lucy Pryor!—Jack, my boy, you must have felt like six pennorth of ha'-pence, what?

OTFORD. I did. But now I—I want to see her again.

SIR PETER. (*Chuckling*) Never know when you've had enough, eh?

OTFORD. But she'll never allow me inside her house. She was magnificent. *Patuit dea*, Peter! She came the goddess!

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SIR PETER. (*Delighted*) Ha! What did I tell ye?

OTFORD. Can't you coax her out here?

SIR PETER. Me! No!—I've told you: I'll have nothing to do with it.

(MRS. POSKETT *has come down* L.)

MRS. POSKETT. (*Playfully*) Now, you two! I'm sure you've gossipped enough.

OTFORD. (*Quickly*) Madam—will you do me a great favour? Will you persuade Madame Lachesnais to come and taste the evening air—not telling her I am here?

SIR PETER. Don't do anything of the sort, Pamela!

MRS. POSKETT. Peter, I'm ashamed of you. (*Cross to* SIR PETER. *To* LORD OTFORD *playfully*) With great pleasure my lord. Me and Peter's that happy: (*Knowingly*) we want to see everybody ditto. (*She goes to No. 5., knocks, and is admitted.* BROOKE-HOSKYN *opens his upstair window. He is in his shirtsleeves. He is distressed. He wipes his forehead with an an enormous bandana*)

SIR PETER. (*Alluding to* MRS. POSKETT'S *remark*) Gobblessmysoul! Jack, is that it?—Here, come in, and have a glass of port wine. (*They turn up*)

(*They see* BROOKE *at his window, but they are on the right of the elm, so that* BROOKE *does not notice them.*)

OTFORD. (*Stopping*) Hoskyn, by all that's wonderful!

SIR PETER. *Brooke*-Hoskyn. I said you must know him.

OTFORD. Know my old butler!—I should think

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so. He married my cook, Mrs. Brooke!—And now he's City Toastmaster——

SIR PETER. By Jehoshaphat!—Is *that*—it? (*Delighted*) When the Walk knows that——!

OTFORD. (*Laughing*) That's your man of fashion, Peter!

SIR PETER. (*Having thought it over*) No! Damme, no!—He's a good fellow, and I'm not a blackguard!—Jack, follow my lead. (*Coming down to front of tree—a little* L. *Cheerily to* BROOKE) Hulloa, Brooke, my boy! Here's your old friend, Otford!

OTFORD. Glad to see you, Hoskyn——

BROOKE. (*In real distress*) O don't!—O, my lord!—Not at this moment—I ain't equal to it, your lordship—I reely ain't.

OTFORD. Sorry you're ill—Too much to eat—and too little to do. What you want is a family to keep you lively.

BROOKE. (*In despair*) A family! O my Lord! (*Disappears abrutly*)

(OTFORD *and* SIR PETER *go up into No.* 1. JACK *cautiously opens his window and whistles "Pop goes the Weasel."* BARBARA *and* BASIL *appear at the ground floor window of No.* 4. JACK *whistles again.*)

BARBARA. (*As if she were* JULIET) Hark, Basil!—The nightingale!

(JACK *whistles once more, more forcibly.*)

BASIL. (*As if he were* ROMEO) Do you think it is the nightingale, dearest?

(JACK *whistles louder still.*)

BARBARA. At least let us make believe it is.

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(JACK *whistles louder still.*)

BASIL. My own one! (*They coo together in the window*)

(MRS. POSKETT *and* MADAME *come out of No.* 5.)

MRS. POSKETT. The air is so balmy.

(JACK *disappears.*)

MADAME. We were just coming out. Marjolaine is strangely restless. (MADAME *sees* BARBARA *and* BASIL *in their ultra-sentimental attitude*) Ah? —Why!—Really?

BARBARA. (*Joyfully*) Yes! We are to be married at once! We are going to ask Doctor Sternroyd to get us a licence!

BASIL. (*As before*) My own!

MADAME. Oh—I am so very glad!

BASIL. (*To* BARBARA) Come in, my own, "lest the winds of heaven visit your face too roughly."

(MARJOLAINE *enters cautiously from the house carrying a pigeon-pie and a loaf of bread; carefully concealing them as much as possible from the characters on the stage. She places them just inside the railings of the house where* JACK *is.*)

BARBARA. Ah, what a poet Dr. Johnson was!

(BARBARA *and* BASIL *close the window, each closes the side of the window opposite to them—their arms crossing—as the windows come together their lips meet. They then disappear inside.*)

MRS. POSKETT. (*Alluding to them*) Well I never! (*To* MADAME, *as they come towards the*

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elm) I wanted you to be the first to know of my betrothal.

MADAME. I hope he will make you very happy.

(MRS. POSKETT *and* MADAME *sit under the tree.*)

MRS. POSKETT. I'll see to that.

MARJOLAINE. (*Joining them*) Isn't it wonderful, *Maman!* An angel's wing has brushed over Pomander Walk, and everybody is going to be married.

MADAME. Yes, my poor child.

MARJOLAINE. (*Sings*) "In Scarlet town——"

MADAME. Surely you are not going to sing?

MRS. POSKETT. Let her, ma'am. 'Twill keep her quiet. (MRS. POSKETT *and* MADAME *sit under the elm*)

(MARJOLAINE *stands between the elm and No.* 5. *She half turns towards them, and sings:*)

In Scarlet Town, where I was born,
There was a fair maid dwellin'——

MADAME. (*To* MRS. POSKETT) Ah! these pathetic old ballads!

(MARJOLAINE *half-turning to No.* 3 *where* JACK *appears, peeping behind the curtain, sings rapidly:*)

A pigeon pie and a loaf of bread
Are just inside the railin'!

(*Enter* LAMPLIGHTER. JACK *excitedly looks out, but cannot see the parcel. Meanwhile the* LAMPLIGHTER *has come with his little ladder, and has lighted the upper lamp, swarming up the ladder to do so.*)

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MADAME. The Lamplighter!—Is there no moon to-night?

MRS. POSKETT. Oh, he'll put the lamps out when the moon rises.

MARJOLAINE. (*Turning to them*)

All in the merry month of May
When green buds they were swellin',——

MADAME. I should like to congratule the Admiral.

MRS. POSKETT. I'll send him out to you. (*She rises, and goes towards No.* 1, *turning to the right of the tree.* MADAME *accompanies her a little way.* MRS. POSKETT *goes into No.* 1)

MARJOLAINE. (*Turning towards* JACK, *singing rapidly, and pointing with violent gestures*)

You'll find the parcel where I say
By lookin' or by smellin'!—

(*She runs across into gazebo.*)

(JACK *sees the parcel, and with a* "Ha!" *leaves the window. Now the* LAMPLIGHTER *is on his ladder at the second lamp, and from that eminence also sees the parcel. He comes down hurriedly.* MADAME *turns.*)

MADAME. (*Calling*) Marjolaine!

MARJOLAINE. *Me voilà, Maman!* (*Runs up to her, to the right of the tree*)

(MADAME *sits a little to the right of the trunk of the tree.* MARJOLAINE *crouches beside her, on the right, so that her mother has to turn away from the houses to speak to her.* MARJOLAINE *keeps a watchful eye on No.* 3. THE LAMPLIGHTER, *bent on capturing the parcel, is at the*

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foot of his ladder. JACK *appears at the door. They both stalk the parcel.*)

MADAME. (*Gravely*) Marjolaine, you are putting on this gaiety to please me.

MARJOLAINE. No, *Maman*—(*She sees the* LAMPLIGHTER'S *manœuvre and exclaims*) Oh!

MADAME. Why do you cry out like that?

MARJOLAINE. (*Volubly, with a tremendous desire to laugh*) Nothing, *Maman.* You are not to be anxious about me. I am quite happy. (*She watches the race for the pie*)

MADAME. I saw Lord Otford on Saturday——

MARJOLAINE. (*Inattentive*) You saw—(THE LAMPLIGHTER *is gaining on* JACK) Oh, Oh!

MADAME. (*Indignant*) Marjolaine! You are laughing!

MARJOLAINE. (*Stifling*) No! No! It was surprise!

MADAME. He was very stern—very indignant—but I told him you——

(THE LAMPLIGHTER *snatches the parcel and bolts.* JACK, *furious, wants to bolt after him, but sees* LORD OTFORD, *who has come out of No.* 1, *and retires crestfallen into No.* 3. MARJOLAINE *is seized with an uncontrollable fit of hysterical laughter and dashes into No.* 5. LORD OTFORD *comes down on the left of the tree, so that, when* MADAME *rises, amazed at* MARJOLAINE'S *behaviour, and turns to follow her, she finds herself face to face with him.*)

MADAME. Lord Otford——

OTFORD. Forgive me.

MADAME. Pray allow me to pass. I am very anxious about my child.

OTFORD. If I am any judge, that young lady is in the best of health and spirits.

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MADAME. You are mistaken. She is—(*Correcting herself*) Yes, of course. She is quite happy.

OTFORD. Then, will you favour me with a few moments?

MADAME. I can see no use renewing our painful

OTFORD. (*Interrupting her deprecatingly*) I am in a grave perplexity. My son has disappeared——

MADAME. (*Indignant*) And you suspect us of harbouring him!

OTFORD. No, no!—On my honour, no!

MADAME. Then——?

OTFORD. Ah—do be patient! I am here on an errand of conciliation!

MADAME. (*With a touch of scorn*) Conciliation!

OTFORD. Jack is very dear to me.

MADAME. Marjolaine is very dear to *me!*

OTFORD. Precisely. I have been considering—Are we justified in keeping these two young people apart?

MADAME. *You* say that?

OTFORD. I do. I have made up my mind not to act my own father over again. If Jack loves your daughter, he is to marry her——

MADAME. That is no longer the question. My daughter refuses to marry your son.

OTFORD. Why? Because she does not love him?

(MADAME *is silent; she sits.*)

OTFORD. (*Sits beside her,* L.) No! But only because you tell her to. She simply obeys out of habit. Ah! Why punish these children because I behaved like a fool years ago, when I knew no better?

MADAME. But——!

OTFORD. (*Earnestly*) And why punish me now

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so late? Is it not possible for me to atone—Lucy?

MADAME. (*Rising*) Lord Otford——!

OTFORD. Don't stop me now! Don't go away! Ah! We are poor creatures, at best! We go blindly past our happiness! Let us hark back, Lucy, and try to find the trail we missed!

MADAME. *W. l*

OTFORD. I.

MADAME. (*Defiantly*) I have been quite happy.

OTFORD. I know it. And I am glad to know it.

MADAME. But I purchased my happiness dearly. (*She turns to him*) You have never realised the suffering you inflicted on me.

OTFORD. I can imagine it.

MADAME. No, you cannot. Only those who have gone through it, can imagine it. (*Lost in her memories*) Nature is very strong, and very merciful. I had never forgotten! Never, for one moment! But life covered the memory. (*Pause*) Then Pierre came and offered me his companionship. I gave him all I could. Oh, the good, true, generous man!

OTFORD. (*With deep feeling*) I honour him!

MADAME. And I honour his memory. (*Pause*)

OTFORD. We are quite frank, Lucy: you loved your husband; I loved my wife.

MADAME. And there is no more to be said. (*She rises*)

OTFORD. (*He rises*) Ah, but there is!—Face your own soul, Lucy, and tell me: did the thought of the old Vicarage garden at Otford never haunt you?

MADAME. Never with any suggestion of disloyalty to Pierre.

OTFORD. Of that I am sure. But it came. I know. (*Quieter; with intensity*) Lucy, Lucy, it was always there! It never left you, as it never left me. It was the fragrant refuge, into which we crept in our solitary moments. Never with dis-

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loyalty, on your side or mine; but for consolation; for rest. Is that true?

MADAME. It was merely the echo of an old song——

OTFORD. But how sweet! How tender!

MADAME. And how sad! (*She sits; with an effort*) No, no! I banished it!

OTFORD. (*With strength; leaning over her*) You *could* not!—No one can!—Think of these two children: Marjolaine and Jack. Suppose we part them now: suppose they go their different ways: do you think either of them will forget the flowing river, the sheltering elm, or the words they have whispered under it? Never! Lucy, Lucy, though we go astray from first love, though we misvalue it, yes! though we desecrate it, it never dies!—*On revient toujours à ses premiers amours!*

MADAME. But we cannot retrace our steps; we cannot undo suffering; we cannot win back innocence.

OTFORD. We can! We started from the garden; we have been on a long journey, with its adventures, and now we are at the garden gate again: the flowers we loved are beckoning to us; the birds we loved are calling us!

MADAME. We cannot recall the sunrise——

OTFORD. But the sunset can be as beautiful!

MADAME. We are old——

OTFORD. I deny it! Do I feel old? Do you look old? I can't vault a five-barred gate, but I can open it, and get the other side just as quickly!

MADAME. (*Smiling*) But—there are other things——

OTFORD. There is, above all, happiness! If we have no children of our own, Lucy, we shall have our grandchildren!

MADAME. No (*Rises*) I have been too persuasive. Marjolaine's love has been nipped in the bud—and Jack has run away from her.

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OTFORD. Not he, if I know the rascal! You tell me Marjolaine is well and happy?

MADAME. Yes, but hysterical. You saw for yourself.

OTFORD. Is she a flighty coquette?

MADAME. Certainly not!

OTFORD. Then I'll bet you a new hat—No! a diamond tiara!—she knows where, Jack is; and there's an understanding between 'em. Lucy! both couples shall be married on the same day! (*She is in his arms*)

MADAME. (*With horror*) Jack!—we shall have to tell them!

OTFORD. (*With dismay*) O Lord!

MADAME. I can't face Marjolaine.

OTFORD. Jack'll roast me properly!

MADAME. How they'll laugh at us!

OTFORD. Let 'em! By Gad, it shall be happy laughter!

(STERNROYD *comes out of No. 3 with a very small white milk jug. At the same time the* EYESORE *and* JIM *come back arm in arm. They embrace very affectionately.*)

MADAME. Sh!—(*To* STERNROYD) Why, Doctor, are you fetching milk so late? I can give you some.

STERNROYD. (*With suppressed rage*) No, Ma'am! I am not seeking the lacteal fluid. As you see me, I, the Reverend Jacob Sternroyd, Doctor of Divinity, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, am on my way to procure—beer!

MADAME. (*With a tinge of disgust*) Oh?—This is Lord Otford.

STERNROYD. (*Drops the jug*) Good heavens!

OTFORD. (*Picking up the pieces and handing them back*) Allow me—your jug, I think. By the

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POMANDER WALK

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way, Doctor, can you tell me anything about a Marriage licence?

STERNROYD. (*In guilty despair*) I said so!—I knew it would come out! (*To* MADAME) Miss Barbara told you!

MADAME. (*Astonished*) Yes! but——

STERNROYD. I wash my hands of it! Two whole days, one of which was the blessèd Sabbath, I have been up to my neck in cabals and intrigues! I have done!—My lord, it was very kind of you to approach the subject so considerately, but (*He produces a document*) here is what you ask for. His Grace was very reluctant, but the pipe, which I now fear was not genuine, did it.—Hah! My conscience is white again. I will tell the young firebrand! (*He calls*) Jack! (*He goes back into No.* 3)—Jack!

OTFORD. But what is this? ? (*He reads it by the light of the lamp*) What do you say now, Lucy?—"John Sayle, of Pomander Walk, in the Parish of Chiswick, bachelor, and Marjolaine Lachesnais, also of Pomander Walk, spinster ——!"

MADAME. Under our very noses!

OTFORD. Old Dryasdust has gone to tell Jack. Let's see what desperate thing they'll do next. Come!

(*They go into the summer-house. The door of No.* 3 *is flung open, and* JACK *and* STERNROYD *appear struggling in the passage.*)

STERNROYD. But, my young friend——!

(JIM *meanders deviously from* R. U. E. *into No.* 1. THE EYESORE *resumes his fishing.*)

JACK. (*Furious*) Let me pass! Five years I've

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been a sailor, but I can't think of the words I want! (*He dashes down the steps*)

STERNROYD. Dear, dear! Tut, tut! (*He retires, shuts the door, and comes into the sitting room on the ground floor, where he lights a shaded lamp, and brews himself a jorum of punch*)

JACK. The old fool!—O my stars! the silly old fool! (*He knocks furiously at No. 5.* NANETTE *appears*) Tell Miss Marjory, that—

NANETTE. (*Impassive*) *Plait-il?*

JACK. O hang!—Er—Deet ah Madermerzell—

MARJOLAINE. (*Appearing, with a cry*) Jack!—Oh! what is it?

JACK. Come out! Come out! (*He brings her down to the front*)

NANETTE. (*Alarmed*) *Ah, mais!—Où est-donc Madame?—(She retires, leaving the door open*)

(JACK *and* MARJOLAINE *come* C.)

JACK. (*Breathlessly*) Sternroyd!—He had the licence!—*Had* it—we were to be married to-morrow!—and he's gone and given it—to whom d'you think?—To my father!

MARJOLAINE. Oh! Then all is over!

JACK. No! All's to begin again! Take me to your mother. Then I'll take you to my father.

(OTFORD *and* MADAME *have come out of the gazebo.*)

OTFORD. That's what you should have done at first, sir!

JACK. Father——!

MARJOLAINE. *Maman!* (*She throws herself into her mother's arms*)

JACK. (*Hotly*) It's no use, sir! You can cut me off with a shilling, but I mean to marry Marjory. (*Fumes*)

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MARJOLAINE. *Maman!*—he came back—and I'm going to marry him!

OTFORD. Madame—what do *you* say?

MADAME. I say, God bless them.

MARJOLAINE. (*Amazed*) *Maman!*

OTFORD. And I say, ditto!

JACK. (*Overjoyed*) Marjory!

(MARJOLAINE *rushes to his arms. They meet between* MADAME *and* OTFORD.)

OTFORD. (*Drily*) H'm. I believe this is a public thoroughfare.

JACK. (*Confused*) O, sir!—Please give me back that document.

OTFORD. Why, no, Jack, *I* want that. (*He and* MADAME *look at each other guiltily*)

JACK. (*Protesting*) But, *sir!*

OTFORD. (*Shyly*) Um—it may come in useful—er—I, too, am John Sayle—and—um—I, too, am going to get married.

JACK. (*Gravely*) Marjory, my father's trying to be funny.

MARJOLAINE. (*Watching her mother, who is in pretty confusion*) *Maman!*—I believe!—I believe!

(*Enter* LAMPLIGHTER *with extinguisher on a pole.*)

OTFORD. (*Coming between* MARJOLAINE *and* JACK) Believe, my child, believe. (*Kisses* MARJOLAINE *on forehead*) Here's the document, Jack; and—ah—there is a pleasant seat under the elm (MARJOLAINE *and* JACK *go to tree and sit* C.) and—agreeable retirement in the—ah—gazebo. (*He and* MADAME *go into the arbour*)

JACK. (*Leading* MARJOLAINE *to the elm, where they sit*) Marjory—how wonderful!

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(SIR PETER *and* JIM *are seen hauling a small brass canon out of No.* 1, *followed by* MRS. POSKETT. THE LAMPLIGHTER *puts out the upper lamp.* BARBARA *and* BASIL *appear in the garden of No.* 4. BASIL *has his fiddle, and plays the* KREUTZER SONATA (*slow movement*) *very softly.*)

SIR PETER. Haul her out!

(JIM *brings gun out of garden of No.* 1.)

MRS. POSKETT. Oh, Peter! I'm frightened!

JIM. (*Hoarsely*) It's all right, mum! I've emptied her.

(*They bring the gun nearly to the footlights.* THE LAMPLIGHTER *puts out the lower lamp.*)

JACK. (*To him*) What are you doing?

LAMPLIGHTER. (*Pointing with his thumb over his shoulder*) Moon! (*He goes up and off.* SIR PETER *is just applying a piece of burning tow to the gun, when* BROOKE-HOSKYN *hurriedly throws open his upstair window and shouts in a horrible whisper*)

BROOKE. Sir Peter!—Sir Peter!—For heaven's sake, don't fire that gun!

SIR PETER. Why the devil not, sir?

BROOKE. Sh!—(*More hoarsely still and with tremendous emphasis*) It's a boy!

SIR PETER. Gobblessmysoul! I'll be godfather!

(RUTH *appears at her upstair window, leans out, plucks jasmine, and throws the blossoms on* BARBARA *and* BASIL. NANETTE *stands in the doorway of No.* 5. *A glorious full moon leaps up at the back, flooding the whole stage with a warm yellow light.* SIR PETER *and* MRS.

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POSKETT *try to go into the gazebo, but are confronted by* MADAME *and* OTFORD; *they turn to the elm, which is occupied by* JACK *and* MARJOLAINE, *so they have to be content to remain standing* R. C. THE EYESORE *catches a fish.* STERNROYD *in his room, with a glass of punch in one hand, and a miniature in the other, solemnly drinks, saying:*)

STERNROYD. Araminta!
OTFORD. (*In the arbour*) Lucy!
BARBARA *and* BASIL. (*Together*) My own!
MARJOLAINE. (*With a happy sigh*) O Jack!
RUTH. (*In her window*) Ah, well!—I'm sure we all hope they'll live happy ever after!

SLOW CURTAIN.

(*On no account alter the lighting for the tableau.*)

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